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**“STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEK CENTRE FOR  
WORK BASED LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS (GCWBLP)”**

A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Professional Studies

**PANAGIOTIS THOMAS**  
B.Sc., M.B.A.

**NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WORK BASED LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS  
MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY  
MARCH 2003**

*This book is dedicated  
to my wife Anna and  
my daughter Athena  
for their love and  
encouragement  
throughout my  
doctoral studies*



# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# C O N T E N T S

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	1
<b>List of Figures</b>	4
<b>List of Tables</b>	5
<b>Abstract</b>	6
<b>Executive Summary</b>	8
<b><u>Chapter 1: Introduction and background</u></b>	11
<b><u>Chapter 2: Conceptual framework</u></b>	
2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Marketing higher education	18
2.3 Customers of higher education	23
2.4 WBL: Emergence, features and benefits	26
2.5 WBL: Applications and perspectives	29
<b><u>Chapter 3: Strategic management implementation</u></b>	
3.1 Strategic management and higher education	33
3.2 Strategic management and the GCWBLP	35
3.2.1 Mission	36
3.2.2 S.W.O.T. analysis	38
3.2.3 Strategic options	42
3.2.4 Strategic choice	44
<b><u>Chapter 4: The research process and methodology</u></b>	
4.1 Research variables and questions	49
4.2 Research aims and objectives	52
4.3 Research methodology	54
4.3.1 Research families	56
4.3.2 Research approaches	58
4.3.3 Research techniques	61
4.4 Research issues	72
4.4.1 Reliability and validity	72
4.4.2 Accessibility and ethical issues	73
4.4.3 Feasibility	74

## **Chapter 5: The WBL-related research results**

5.1 Potential individual student profile	76
5.2 Past graduates' satisfaction	87
5.3 Work based learning studies' perception	96
5.3.1 Insurance companies	96
5.3.2 Banking organisations	102
5.3.3 Companies currently sponsor WBL studies	106
5.4 Marketing the programmes overseas	110
5.5 Implications for marketing the programmes	115

## **Chapter 6: The market data and marketing activities**

6.1 Market overview and market size	120
6.1.1 Private Colleges	122
6.1.2 Public Universities	129
6.1.3 Distance Learning Higher Education Institutions	129
6.2 Market segmentation and targeting	134
6.3 GCWBLP marketing literature evaluation	138
6.4 GCWBLP advertising and PR activities review	143
6.4.1 Advertising results evaluation	143
6.4.2 PR activities review	149
6.5 Direct mail and niche market opportunities review	151

## **Chapter 7: The marketing planning**

7.1 Strategic marketing planning	155
7.2 The three-year marketing plan	159

## **Chapter 8: Conclusions and recommendations**

8.1 Conclusions	170
8.2 Recommendations	177
8.3 Summary of action points and possibilities of further research	182

<b>Bibliography</b>	184
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<b>Appendices</b>	192
Appendix 1: Survey forms	193
Appendix 2: Advertorial about WBLS in Asfalistiki Agora magazine	204
Appendix 3: Brochure on WBL programmes	207
Appendix 4: Press ad on WBL programmes	211
Appendix 5: Press releases on WBL programmes	213
Appendix 6: Participation in Palso Conference	221

# LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Figure 1</b> Programme / market opportunity matrix	42
<b>Figure 2</b> Typical S-shaped life cycle curve	44
<b>Figure 3</b> Suitable strategic choice identification procedure	45
<b>Figure 4</b> The research wheel	49
<b>Figure 5</b> The action research cycle	59
<b>Figure 6</b> Distribution of potential students' educational level	80
<b>Figure 7</b> Percentage distribution of potential students and past graduates according to their working field	82
<b>Figure 8</b> Percentage distribution of survey respondents and past graduates per graduation year	87
<b>Figure 9</b> Percentage distribution of survey respondents and past graduates per subject	88
<b>Figure 10</b> Percentage distribution of MA/MSc programmes by nature of institution	121
<b>Figure 11</b> Percentage distribution of experienced professionals attending postgraduate programmes by mode of delivery	133
<b>Figure 12</b> Weekly ad placements and response rate relationship for the 2000 campaign	145
<b>Figure 13</b> Weekly ad placements and response rate relationship for the 2001 campaign	147
<b>Figure 14</b> Strategic planning process	156

# LIST OF TABLES

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table 1</b> Sex distribution by age group	78
<b>Table 2</b> Arithmetic mean calculation for the potential students' age	79
<b>Table 3</b> Arithmetic mean calculation for the potential students' years of experience	80
<b>Table 4</b> Arithmetic means for the course materials per module	90
<b>Table 5</b> Arithmetic means for the course materials per module for the main respondents' working areas	90
<b>Table 6</b> Percentage distribution of tutor & personal levels of support	92
<b>Table 7</b> Percentage distribution of WBL award contribution towards career advancement per graduation year	93
<b>Table 8</b> Higher education institutions offering MA/MSc programmes for experienced professionals	132
<b>Table 9</b> Brochures factor index analysis	141
<b>Table 10</b> Comparative advertising campaigns results analysis	147
<b>Table 11</b> Student number analysis for the last two academic years	160
<b>Table 12</b> Student enrolment objectives for the next three academic years	161
<b>Table 13</b> Three-year financial plan and enrolment objectives per promotional activity	168
<b>Table 14</b> Student enrolment objectives per activity per year	169

# ABSTRACT

Work based learning (WBL) is the term being used to describe a class of university programmes that bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces. Middlesex University was a pioneer in the institutional development of work based learning through its National Centre of Work Based Learning Partnerships (NCWBLP) established in 1993. The Greek Centre (GCWBLP) was established in Athens and began operations in 1997 to promote WBL programmes at all levels in Greece. The programmes were very successfully introduced with a total of 110 registrations by end of January 1999.

The main purpose of this project is the identification of business opportunities for the GCWBLP that will reinforce and expand the student intake levels. The main aim is to design a long-term development strategy for the Centre that will also contribute to its interim development in the form of a three-year marketing plan. Research was absolutely necessary to implement and evaluate additional (new) ways to promote the WBL programmes and expand student recruitment. This research area is directly related to my work role as I am currently in charge of various marketing activities to promote WBL Studies.

Action research approach was applied to develop and evaluate marketing literature (brochure) for the programmes and to assess the effectiveness of the advertising campaign and the received feedback was applied to propose improvement for the revision of the brochure (out in August 2002) and for the enhancement of the advertising campaign effectiveness (September-October 2002). Action research in combination with survey approach was applied to find out the current profiles of an individual WBL perspective student-client, to assess the level of satisfaction from all the WBL graduates and to evaluate corporate perception of WBL programmes. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (only for the last survey) were applied to gather the required data.

The response from the potential student profile survey provided directions for promoting the WBL programmes more effectively by targeting professionals with extensive working experience in specific fields. The past graduates' satisfaction survey produced very encouraging results as the vast majority of the respondents confirmed that WBL programmes

managed to match their initial expectations and commented that they would very likely recommend them to others.

The WBL concept was positively perceived by the majority of the training managers from the insurance industry. The training managers in the banking sector did not perceive WBL that well as most of them commented that they would not recommend WBL to their organisation due to the specific requirements (relevant subject-based knowledge acquisition) that training programmes should meet in order to be approved. The major finding from the survey on marketing WBL programmes overseas was associated with the partnership concept that has been very successful in the form of collaboration with other educational institutions which provide the taught subject-based knowledge and a solid base of students for WBL programmes to expand.

Intensified promotion and identification of new markets for existing programmes were identified as the strategic choices for the coming two years. For the third year (2004-05), enhancement of the currently delivered programmes with the introduction of a taught subject-based module was recommended in line with the survey findings. Further research is necessary in this area to develop this “new” module. Research is also recommended in the diversified application of the WBL programmes under which the work based research project is the major component thus increasing the marketability of the programmes within the corporations and various educational providers.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Work Based Learning (WBL) Studies at Middlesex is regarded as a field of study in its own right (work is the curriculum) and all awards carry the generic (WBL) studies title customised by the addition of a negotiated title that is closely linked to the student's learning in and through his/her work. A work based learning programme includes four main stages (modules): Recognition and Accreditation of Learning (RAL), Learning Agreement, Research Methodologies and Work Based Research Projects. The key benefits for individual learners from participation in a WBL programme are: reinforcement of project management and methodological skills and enhancement of reflective thinking. For companies, knowledge creation primarily through project activity, effective knowledge management, enhancement of intellectual capital and organisational learning are obvious benefits, which contribute towards achieving business benefits.

The existing environment in Greece (lack of established lifelong learning policy, no state recognition of WBL by the government body Dikatsa, corporate perception of WBL as a mode rather as a field of study) is not conducive for WBL to grow the way it has emerged in the UK (mainly through government funding). However, growth can still be achieved through an approach which is based on both the individual student and corporate partnership in which the employer is involved in the design of the taught subject-based module only and not in the customisation of the whole programme or accreditation of internal training courses.

The various strategic options GCWBLP faces were evaluated by applying three analytical tools: S.W.O.T. Analysis, Market / Institutional / Product Life Cycle Analysis and Mission Statement which we defined in the beginning of our strategic management implementation exercise. The following strategic choices emerged from the above analysis: market penetration (intensify promotion and recruitment of existing markets for existing programmes) and market development (locate new markets for current programmes) as short-term strategic choices and programme modification (enhancement with new components) as a mid-term strategic option. The marketing approach to be applied is mass marketing in which the curriculum is one (work) and the target is every individual with substantial experiential learning in his/her own field and every organisation which is receptive to WBL benefits.



The number of working professionals with substantial experiential learning attending a postgraduate course as of June 2002 - who were also potential WBL students - was estimated to be about 2,200 students and this market size is expected to grow by at least 10% per annum. Hellenic Open University dominates the market with 58% (out of 59% for the total distance learning segment). The segment of private colleges which offer taught courses seems to be extremely competitive with 21 players competing for 27% of the market volume. The taught courses offered by public universities have achieved a good share of approximately 10% with only two institutions. WBL defines a market segment by itself and GCWBLP currently enjoys about 4% of the market share.

The total number of registered students with the GCWBLP during the academic year 2001-02 was 140, with 55 new students and 85 continuing students from the previous academic year. The objective is to achieve 25% annual increase on the total registered number, which in actual terms means 126 new students for the 2002-03 year taking into consideration the number of continuing students. The proposed marketing strategy to accomplish this target was based on the marketing mix in which three out of the four main components (programme, price and place) contain no major changes in comparison to the current ones but the fourth component (promotion) has been substantially improved in relation to the current promotional activities. The key components of the promotional activities proposed for 2002-03 are:

- Advertising (mainly newspapers) to reinforce the low awareness of the WBL studies. Budget: € 27,000 to buy 60 insertions. Expected new students: 30.
- Public Relations with an improved version of our brochure, press releases to further enhance WBL awareness and quarterly newsletter to start its circulation early 2003. Budget: € 2,000 only for the first newsletter issue.
- Direct mail to selected members of two identified associations and of the Middlesex University Alumni who reside in Greece. Budget: € 16,500 to send out 6600 brochures. Expected new students: 50.
- Presentations to further enhance WBL awareness and build recruitment from various corporations and educational providers. No cost involved.

Overall for the year 2002-03 the total spending (inclusive of development and mailing costs) will be approximately € 47,100 and the outcome is estimated to be 80 new students from

advertising and direct mail. The remaining 46 students (to make up the yearly target) are expected to be recruited by general publicity (20), Interlife of Cyprus (11) and a group of 15 insurance agents who have confirmed their intentions to apply. The recruitment expectations from general publicity and Interlife are considered to be very realistic. The gross profit (defined as total income from tuition fees minus promotional expenses and before deduction of any tuition, administration etc costs) is estimated to reach the level of € 771,900.

For the year 2003-04 the total spending will go up to € 66,400 mainly due to the cost involved in the public relations activities (web site and exhibition). These activities will generate 20 new students while advertising and direct mail will both produce 75 new students with a total spending of € 45,900. Another 65 students will be recruited as a result of the presentations, general publicity and from Interlife (Cyprus). The gross profit estimate is about € 973,600.

The identified mid-term strategic choice (programme modification) will be implemented in 2004-05 with the introduction of a new taught subject-based module. The new “enhanced” programme will be priced at about € 8,500 (vs. € 6,500 for the currently delivered ones) and will approximately attract 30 students, while another 170 students will be registered for the WBL programmes offered with the current structure. Developmental work on the new concept should commence during the academic year 2003-04. For the time being, the issues that require immediate action to be taken are:

- Evaluation of the advertising campaign (September-October 2002) effectiveness and preparation of the second advertising campaign phase.
- Completion of direct mail activities for Palso and Esma members.
- Development of the layout for the first issue of the newsletter and
- Identification of educational providers as potential partners and arrangement of presentations on WBL programmes.

# 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In his famous book *Post-Capitalist Society*, Peter Drucker (1993), one of the most influential authors in management studies of the recent times, introduced the term “knowledge society” to emphasize the key role knowledge plays within society. He argued that knowledge is not just another resource alongside the traditional factors of production - labour, capital and land – but the only meaningful resource today. The fact that knowledge has become the resource rather than a resource, is what makes the new society unique, he contends.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and other leading management thinkers the manufacturing, service and information sectors will be based on knowledge in the coming age, and business organisations will evolve into knowledge creators in many ways. In a strict sense, knowledge is created only by individuals. An organisation cannot create knowledge without individuals but it supports creative individuals or provides contexts for them to create knowledge. Clarke and Rollo (2001) argue that knowledge produced and carried by individuals only reaches its full potential to create economic value when it is embodied in organisational routines, that is when it has been converted into organisational knowledge. Organisational knowledge exists in two basic forms: tacit and explicit knowledge.

Tacit knowledge is personal, experimental, intuitive, context sensitive and communicated most effectively in face-to-face collaboration. Explicit knowledge is codified, formal, systematic and can be more easily identified, gathered, measured and stored. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) examined the process of translation of tacit into explicit knowledge and identified four inter-related processes by which knowledge flows around the organisation and

transmutes into different forms. According to them “organisational knowledge creation is a continuous and dynamic interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge”. (p.62)

Knowledge in higher education can also be distinguished between two different forms. Scott (1995) refers to mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge and believes that mode 1 knowledge has four characteristics: It is (i) linear, causal, cumulative, (ii) regarded as a closed system, (iii) rooted as disciplinary authority and (iv) publicly organised and funded. The characteristics of mode 2 knowledge are very different as it is multi-variant, unsystematic and regarded as an open system with users who are “creative agents” and not “passive beneficiaries”.

The main distinction between the two modes of knowledge is that the mode 1 knowledge source is mainly to be found within the university, while the production of mode 2 knowledge takes place largely in the working environment or in the wider social arena. This distinction is directly related to the distinction between university based learning (mode 1 knowledge) and work based learning, which is a field of study that recognises bodies of knowledge derived through the interdisciplinarity of work. We should highlight that work based learning is neither mode 1 or mode 2 knowledge only but it actually intersects them as it is a combination of experiential learning with taught subject matters which enable students to undertake research and development projects. Costley (2000) points out that the main purpose of knowledge in work based learning is to enable communities of practice and individuals within them to acquire the right knowledge and abilities that make them improved and more effective as communities and practitioners.

Work based learning is not only about recognition of individual’s prior learning. It is also very important at the corporate level as it may be used to articulate the tacit (mode 2) into explicit (mode 1) knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), or to enhance the skills and knowledge of individuals within the organisation and therefore to improve the organisation’s performance. According to Portwood (2000), the successful emergence of work based learning in the U.K. is the result of a new understanding of the university’s role in the sustained development of the capabilities of individuals and organisations. Indeed, Fulton et al (1996) argue that government sponsored projects in the early 1990s enabled universities to explore this new understanding and led some to go beyond the limited use of accreditation for

individual's prior learning and company training programmes to making work based learning a central feature of the university's academic programmes.

Middlesex University was a pioneer in the institutional development of work based learning through its National Centre of Work Based Learning Partnerships (NCWBLP) established in 1993. Portwood (2000) indicates that Work Based Learning (WBL) Studies at Middlesex is regarded as a field of study in its own right and all awards carry the generic (WBL) studies title customised by the addition of a negotiated title that is closely linked to the student's learning in and through his/her work. Armsby and Costley (1998) identify the following generic elements of a WBL programme at undergraduate or postgraduate level: recognition and accreditation of learning, programme planning, research methods and one or more work based projects. Individuals and employer/sponsor organisations (if appropriate) play a key role in the design of the programme – defined as learning agreement - to ensure that it meets the personal development needs of the individual, the organisation's objectives and the university's requirements.

The first work based learning module (Accreditation of Prior and Work Based Learning) at Middlesex was validated in 1993 while additional negotiated modules were added in 1994. The Academic Board approved the WBL studies programme in 1995 and the 1997 academic restructuring of the University located NCWBLP and WBL programmes as part of the new School of Lifelong Learning and Education. Led by favourable market conditions Middlesex University initiated efforts to take WBL programmes worldwide.

Greece was identified as the first country to market the programmes and a senior Middlesex academic (who is native to the country and therefore familiar with its language and customs) with expertise in student recruitment and a wide network of commercial contacts evaluated the market opportunities and finally established the Greek Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships (GCWBLP) in Athens in 1997. A large team of professionals and academics was trained by the GCWBLP Academic Director as advisors and assessors.

The Centre is currently delivering the Masters, Bachelors and the Doctorate (MProf/Dprof) programmes throughout Greece with NCWBLP's role to be mainly that of monitoring and quality assurance. The decision was taken for the Centre to limit recruitment on the

postgraduate level for the first year (1997/98) to ensure high academic standards achieved from the beginning of the operation. Recruitment was the main priority for the following year and after a number of presentations made to public and private organisations a major contract with a leading financial institution (Interamerican) secured remarkable student recruitment rates. The successful introduction of the WBL studies programme exceeded by far the pre-launch expectations within a market context that was going through fundamental changes.

The market of postgraduate programmes for experienced professionals in Greece was characterised until 1998 by the presence of a large number of privately-owned colleges (also known as laboratories of liberal studies) and two state universities that were offering taught programmes mostly Masters in Business Administration (MBAs). Almost all the colleges had established partnerships with British and American Universities in order to offer their programmes in the local market. The market conditions changed dramatically in 1998 when the (state-run) Open University launched its pilot programmes targeted at working professionals. The Open University offered (and still offers) distance learning programmes, thus establishing a new segment that captured about half of the market in terms of student volume.

The outstanding perception of the new study mode (distance learning) not only took a large market share away from the taught courses mode, but also contributed to revising the current educational philosophy that was exclusively based on the taught courses concept. Potential students – especially with working experience - started considering non-taught programmes and one of them was WBL studies that managed to capture a remarkable (approximately 4 per cent of the market) share with a total of 83 students registering into the MA/MSc programmes by end of June 1998 (1997-98 GCWBLP data). This figure was increased to a total of 110 registrations by end of January 1999. A 20% increase (on a year per year basis for new students) was planned for the academic years 1999-00 and 2000-01 but the actual figures did not quite achieve these targets (for information on recent student registration numbers, see 7.2). In other words, the introductory stage success set high expectations for the following years, but apparently those expectations were not met.

The main purpose of this project is the identification of business opportunities for the GCWBLP that will reinforce and expand the student intake levels. The initial WBL success

proved that the local educational context was “ready” to accept this innovative higher education concept. Now, the key issue is to specify ways to effectively market it. Research – a planned and systematic activity which provides reliable ways of finding out and deepening our understanding - is absolutely necessary at this stage to implement and evaluate additional (new) ways to promote the WBL programmes and expand student recruitment. Special emphasis will be given to the programme customisation for individuals and their organisations, which is the main WBL selling point. The research will build upon the success story of the partnership with Interamerican and will attempt to evaluate the WBL perception at corporate level with the objective to form new partnerships. The collaboration with various corporations will not only secure high student recruitment levels, but will also enhance the organisational knowledge by transforming tacit knowledge into explicit one and adding new knowledge through the student/worker’s project activity.

Market research will also be contacted to estimate market size, identify key players and evaluate their programmes and their market share. All the GCWBLP previously undertaken marketing activities will be reviewed and their impact on the recruitment will be assessed. Finally, the feedback from the WBL graduates will be sought with the objective to introduce improvements to the currently delivered programmes (if necessary). All the above research activities, which will affect a number of user groups such as Middlesex University, Greek Centre Directors, customers-students etc, should be done at all times (even after completion of this project) in consultation with the Academic (University) and Commercial Directors (Plaisio plc) of the Greek Centre to ensure that high market share is continuously achieved by the WBL programmes.

I was appointed (March 2000) as an advisor/assessor for the Centre with additional marketing responsibilities for the WBL programmes. My professional background (marketing strategy, business development), project and research capabilities and deep knowledge of the strategic development issues that have been accumulated over my 13-year career will provide knowledge and experience in the effort to improve on the existing strategy, which will be defined in the outcomes of my doctorate project. This research area is directly related to my work role as I am currently in charge of various marketing activities to further develop WBL studies. My position (advisor for the GCWBLP) gives me accessibility to significant information and feedback received from several activities undertaken for the Centre’s

development over the last five years. The research project will conclude with an original proposal of great interest for my employer and with clear evidence of results additional to those achieved currently.

My first priority is to establish a context for the proposed study. The next chapter will clarify the relationship between my project and previous work conducted on the topic.



# 2

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

My research study will investigate the ways for the strategic management and development of the GCWBLP. Its main focus will be on marketing higher education services and especially work based learning programmes. A number of theoretical questions stem from the above statement such as:

- What is higher education marketing?
- How is marketing perceived by educators?
- Who are the higher education customers?
- How work based learning has emerged and what are its features and benefits?
- What are the applications and future perspectives of work based learning?

It would be very beneficial at this point of time to establish a conceptual framework by taking a close look at the observations and ideas of others who are interested in the same and related questions. The following literature review is not an attempt to report everything I have read during the last 18 months, but it is a selection of source material that provide the expertise required for my research project to enhance its contribution.

My primary task will be to critically approach the identified knowledge in the relevant field, evaluate the content for its application to my research and present my own point of view.

## 2.2 MARKETING HIGHER EDUCATION

In a study carried out in the USA in 1985, the question “What is marketing?” was asked of 300 educational institution administrators, whose institutions were facing declining student enrolments, increasing costs and rising tuition fees. According to Murphy et al as cited by Kotler and Fox (1985), the results indicated that: Sixty-one per cent viewed marketing as a combination of selling, advertising and public relations. Another twenty-one per cent said it was only one of these three activities. Only a few per cent knew that marketing had something to do with needs assessment, market research, product development, pricing and distribution.

It appears that the same is true within the UK. There was little to no marketing activity prior to 1985, with the sector growing with significant rates. There has also been relatively little published research on the marketing aspects of activity in educational institutions. Hebron (1989) argued for a marketing approach in higher education but before we move on to evaluate other opinions on this topic, I would like to attempt to define educational services marketing.

Generally speaking, the fact that people have needs and wants lays the groundwork for marketing. Kotler and Fox (1995) point out that marketing exists when people decide to satisfy their needs and wants through exchange. Exchange is the act of obtaining a desired product or benefit from someone by offering something in return. The educational institution offers satisfaction (courses) to its markets and in return it receives tuition payments. The concept of exchange is central to marketing. A professional marketer is skilled at understanding, planning and managing exchanges. We are now able to describe marketing by taking the above into consideration. Some authors describe marketing as a process, others as a philosophy and yet others as a set of specific activities. I believe that the Kotler and Fox's (1995) definition is the most complete one. They described institutional marketing as:

“The analysis, planning, implementation and control of carefully formulated programmes designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets to achieve institutional objectives. Marketing involves designing the institution's offerings to meet the target markets' needs and desires, and using effective pricing, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and service these markets”. (p.6)

Thus “marketing” is both a management philosophy and a planning process, which has as its objective the continuous satisfaction of an institution’s relevant publics in a way that ensures institutional vitality and growth.

The marketing concept for education was regarded in the 1990s with suspicion by many in the UK. Wragg (1993) expressed strong hostility to education becoming subject to market forces. He stated that: “Marketing subsumes an ideology that makes the needs and wishes of an organisation’s customers more important than its members’ preferred methods of working. It can also appear to define the value of a product / service solely in terms of what purchasers are prepared to pay for it and therefore to encourage providers of services (schools) to consider questions of cost of service more important than ethically rounded processes of practice” (p.18). I believe that this point of view is linked to the historical role of the teaching profession, which has been to implement what it perceives as educationally desirable practices, regardless of cost. Academics are usually concerned with the quality of educational experience, which they provide to students and only rarely and reluctantly with the commercial or marketing aspects of their work. But we need to highlight here that the latter provide crucial constraints on resources, which inevitably affect outcomes.

Other critics of educational marketing have expressed several concerns: that educational institutions may be forced to employ promotional “gimmicks” to attract resources, that unhealthy competition may ensue among educational institutions, that these practices may diminish the quality of education and that the marketing in educational institutions may lead to a waste of resources. My point of view is that all these concerns are based on ignorance of what marketing is and what it can offer. Marketing is often perceived as synonymous with promotion or advertising because these are the most visible components of marketing activities. That’s a completely wrong perception. Marketing is not crass commercialisation, aggressive selling or promotional gimmicks. Product development is the centre of the marketing process. In education, the product “refers” to academic programmes. The success or failure of any marketing process in education depends on the extent to which the developed programmes satisfy identifiable needs and desires of current and potential students.

The aspect of marketing, which seems to cause more offence in educational institutions is related to selling. It is thought to be unprofessional, if not unethical, for professional educators

to try to attract custom when their professional codes emphasize providing educational services to other people altruistically. But, on the other hand, we should consider that clients and potential clients may need to know the quality of a school's programme or process and the competence of its staff if they are to make justified choices about how best to meet their educational needs. School prospectuses and open days provide the potential students with this information. It is necessary and definitely not unethical to express the advantages of educational services as long as the truth is told.

It is therefore the lack of knowledge on what marketing can do that leads many to regard with suspicion the concept of marketing in education. Harvey (1996) stated that marketing is regarded as ethically undesirable, as a potential tool for the application of market forces, but the methods and ideology of commercial marketing can be beneficial rather than harmful and may be imperative for schools and colleges wishing to attract students and for teachers seeking to implement their educational values more successfully.

The adoption of marketing approach and use of marketing principles and strategies became extremely important for the vitality and growth of higher education institutions due to the changes, often referred to (O' Michael, 1990) as "reforms", by governments to reduce public spending on education, increase competition among educational institutions and make curriculum development more responsive to identifiable needs of society.

It was noted (O' Michael, 1990) that, in many countries (UK, USA, Canada, Germany, Japan), educational institutions in the late 1980s no longer enjoyed the robust budgets that used to make financial constraint a non-issue in the educational sector. Conditions changed drastically when we experienced the decline of educational spending in relation to gross national product or total government expenditures in most of the above countries. The funding of education was viewed with scepticism and the thought that "users of educational services should contribute more towards the funding of these services" found an increasing number of supporters in the UK and the USA.

The Education Reform Act 1988 brought about a number of radical changes in the structure and funding of UK higher education institutions. Cooper (1988) argues that some of the reforms emanating from this act include increasing the level of funds and enrolment of private

schools, devolution of authority, school site management, open enrolment and breaking the authority of local educational authorities. The introduction of the Act injected market values and the spirit of competitiveness into the British Educational system. Maclure (1989) acknowledged that, "Even before the passing of the Act, falling rolls had forced schools to compete for clients. Those that failed to attract their share of applicants knew that sooner or later their viability would be called in question" (p.34).

Apart from the Education Reform Act, we also experienced two major environmental changes to the traditional university environment in the UK. First, in 1992 the former polytechnics were given university status, thereby dramatically expanding the number and variety of degree courses on offer (Naudé and Ivy, 1999). The Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) validated all degrees awarded by the former polytechnics which – as new universities - introduced an applied and vocational approach to learning. Second, changes in technology have lowered the cost of entering the market, leading to an increase in both distance learning and internet-based courses. One obvious result of these changes has been that many universities found themselves operating in an unfamiliar environment: having to compete for students. Academic institutions had no choice but to market their services even more aggressively in order to increase the market share in terms of student numbers and to acquire a competitive advantage over their rivals.

A very interesting survey was conducted by Naudé and Ivy (1999) in order to find out how both old and new (former polytechnics the status of which was altered to fully fledged universities) are responding to this rapidly changing environment. The results suggest that old universities appear to market themselves by doing what they consider they do best – research and teaching in the classroom. In other words, they try to optimise the learning process once the students are in their classrooms. The new universities, on the other hand, seem to be focusing their attention on trying to influence the students' perceptions about where to study. Given that they cannot rely on traditions of teaching and research excellence, they are adopting a more aggressive approach by actively reaching out to prospective students earlier in the decision making process. I believe that this strategy does make sense, as it is to the university's benefit that the prospective students hear about tangible benefits from the university early in their decision cycle. I also consider that it is very likely that the old universities will react more aggressively if they are to prevent the newer, more aggressive

players growing their market share. The old universities can no longer afford to adopt a passive strategy and hope that they will continue to attract sufficient students by relying on their traditional intangible benefits of faculty, teaching and research.

Educational administrators now admit that marketing is a legitimate, relevant and viable management strategy and, given the increasing competition in higher education, colleges and universities pay more attention to the marketing issues with emphasis on understanding the student-buyer behaviour. Marketing, in fact, is a people (student) oriented concept and good marketing is opposed to crass promotion and selling. In the long run, good marketing tends to drive out bad marketing and – in the case of education - non-marketing as very few universities can afford the risks of refusing to market themselves in the new competitive environment.

Today, educational marketing is no longer viewed with suspicion or considered as ethically undesirable as it was the case 20 years ago. Over this long history, the acceptance and focus of educational marketing has evolved and according to Kotler and Fox (1995) this evolution can be described in the following six stages:

- Marketing is unnecessary. The school felt it did not need any marketing as it assumed that the value of education was obvious and students enrolled because they wanted exactly what the school offered.
- Marketing is promotion. Schools found that they were not enrolling enough students and established an admissions office, which functioned as a sales department sending out brochures and catalogues.
- Marketing is segmentation and marketing research. The more advanced schools realised that if the admissions office better understand those who enrol, the staff can direct efforts to attract similar students. The admissions office should either develop a research capability or hire consultant to conduct marketing research.
- Marketing is positioning. Some schools began to appreciate the importance of achieving distinctiveness in the minds of prospective students and decided to take “a position” in the map of educational institutions in order to be the preferred school for certain student segments.
- Marketing is strategic planning. Some schools realised the connection between external changes (in economy, demographics and values) and the school’s image and positioning

and extended their efforts to identify major trends and to revise programmes and to align their efforts with these trends.

- Marketing is enrolment management. A few schools viewed each student admission as the beginning of a relationship with the school that would extend into many years even after the graduation. Treating each student as a valued partner in a relationship called for significant changes in policies, procedures and services.

Back in the late 1980s various educational institutions in Greece became involved in marketing activities, mainly press advertisements. Today, the key players in the conventional higher education allocate every year significant budgets for TV commercials, radio and press advertisements, organise public relations activities (i.e. open days) and run various promotions (i.e. free laptop for certain courses). GCWBLP has also started employing marketing tools (mainly press advertisements) to increase the awareness of the work based learning concept and its benefits.

It is now well accepted for educational institutions to become involved in marketing. The question is: “How far do they really organise themselves to be customer-oriented and how far do they understand the needs and wants of those customers?” This issue is complicated by the fact that is sometimes difficult to really know who the customer is. The section below draws the attention to this issue.

## 2.3 CUSTOMERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Marketers use the term consumer to refer to the person who uses and benefits from the product or service, and the term customer to mean the person who selects a particular source for this product or service. Some educators avoid the term customer (they prefer client or student) because it places the teacher-student relationship on a commercial basis and suggests that the professor’s activities in teaching and research are products. Gray (1991) noted that clients are often long term users of such things as the personal services of a lawyer, whereas customers tend to have brief, one-off contacts with providers when purchasing goods or services. On this argument universities would seem to have clients rather than customers. Distinguishing between clients and customers in this way is helpful but does not address the deeper problems of understanding for whom the education service is constructed, i.e. to whom it is accountable, even if it is clear to whom the educational service is delivered.

Higher education provides a wide variety of possible benefits in a number of different forms. A number of problems will usually arise if we attempt to identify who in fact acquires these benefits. Higher education has a number of complementary and contradictory customers. At the simplest level, institutions can regard the students as their customers. After all it is they who enter into the relationship with the institutions. The above customer definition raises an obvious problem. If one of the goals of marketing is to retain current customers rather than continually seek to get new ones, how does this apply to higher education? The percentage of students that remain loyal to an institution and stay on to pursue postgraduate courses is definitely too small to be the focus of any institution's marketing strategy at the undergraduate level. So it makes more sense to regard the students as consumers and not as customers, a fact that has been recognised by Conway et al (1994).

Robinson and Long (1988) distinguished between the different interested parties by categorising them into three groups: primary, secondary and tertiary customers. They see primary customers as being the students, secondary customers as the paymasters, i.e. local education authorities, employers etc and tertiary customers as validating bodies, ex-students, employers, accreditation organisations, parents etc. Kotler and Fox (1995) expanded upon this model by suggesting up to 16 different publics who have an actual or potential interest in or effect of the institution. These different stakeholders are: faculty, administration and staff, parents of students, accreditation organisations, current students, prospective students, mass media, general public, local community, alumni, foundations, legislature and government agencies, business community, suppliers, competitors and trustees/regents.

The needs and desires of these various higher education customers may in some circumstances conflict with each other. This could be seen as problematic for institutions, which attempt to produce strategies that satisfy these needs effectively (i.e. by achieving the desired result from the customer's point of view) and efficiently (i.e. the minimum level of resources being used to achieve the desired results). Another difficulty is associated with the fact that students can be either considered as customers (with courses as the higher education products) or as products of the institution in the eyes of third parties such as employers.

Litten (1980) makes the point that the student becomes part of the service and production process of the college. The student body is one of the marketable resources of a college.



Association with other students outside the curriculum is a major educational component as well as students being essential as active components of the formal education process. Marketing a college therefore involves marketing a set of institutional expectations of the client (formal and informal), which does not characterise many other spheres of marketing. Litten uses the term “quasi-product” to describe the student’s relationship to an academic institution. The student is not seen as a product as such because, technically, the student is not something that the college produces for direct exchange in the marketplace. However, there is a production function of academic institutions for, unlike most service industries, colleges evaluate the student-product and certify his/her characteristics in a similar way to which other industries certify the performance characteristics of their products.

Kotler and Fox (1995) further argued that students are raw materials, graduates the product and the prospective employers the customer. I believe that if we adopt this point of view, higher education is a value-added process and thus the institution can be considered as a manufacturing organisation. However, the student is likely to influence the process and as such is not just raw material merely going through a standard manufacturing process.

In the case of GCWBLP, it is – more or less - clear that the student is the customer. A large percentage (66%) of the graduates had initiated their application themselves as a planned career development and had been financially self-supporting. Approximately one in every three graduates to date (June 2002) was sponsored (or partly sponsored) by his/her organisations. Even so, there is need to promote the courses to organisations as current and prospective employers of WBL students on graduation.

Once the consumer behaviour is understood, the educational services marketer needs to recognise that different consumers have differing needs and wants and that the market is not homogeneous but it should be segmented. It is believed that when institutions have understood the different market segments they should target one or more of these segments in accordance with their own particular organisational strengths. Having obtained an understanding of market segmentation, the marketers should proceed with developing the marketing strategy. O’ Michael (1990) believes that the application of marketing to educational institutions has several implications such as harmonising a marketing philosophy with the institutional mission, creating appropriate organisational structures and implementing

marketing strategies that bring programme development closer to the needs of the relevant publics.

## 2.4 WORK BASED LEARNING: EMERGENCE, FEATURES & BENEFITS

In his classic study of the competitive advantage of nation states, Porter's (1990) analysis of Britain concluded that: "British companies will benefit by working closely with local universities in developing curricula, sponsoring research and recruiting graduates" (p.721). One of the most successful responses to this message was the Teesside Business School – Cummins Ltd (US based diesel engines manufacturer) partnership launched in 1992 with the validation of the Cummins management development programme for supervisors that matched the quality of the university Certificate in Management programme and of the Cummins middle management programme against the university Diploma in Management programme in 1993.

Although this partnership (which adopted elements from the work based learning approach such as ownership of their own development by students, work based research projects etc) did not last long due to the 1996 Cummins major worldwide downsizing exercise (Keithley and Redman, 1997), it laid the foundation for more successful partnerships with potential to facilitate the investment in human resources development that Porter's analysis calls for.

Coffield (1995) and Robertson (1994) argue that despite the calls made to higher education to reposition itself in the market by making lifelong learning its overall strategic objective most higher education institutions in the UK have avoided addressing the issue of work based learning as they had not seriously considered the workplace as a site of learning. However, it was becoming agreeable, as Davies (1998) points out, that learning itself, rooted in individual experience, is playing a different part in the generation of knowledge since that experience is increasingly taking place at work.

The government has produced several documents that refer to WBL development and delivery. According to Mills and Whittaker (2001), two clear strands of supporting arguments emerge. The first is instrumental and stresses the role of WBL in economic development. Within this strand, three separate issues are described. First, WBL, is presented as meeting the needs of employers and industry (DfEE, 1997). Second, WBL breaks down the barriers

between industry and HE (DfEE, 1997) and third, WBL meets the personal and job development needs of individuals. (DfEE, 1998a). The second strand (DfEE, 1998b) is policy related and includes a number of arguments in favour of WBL, as part of the social inclusion (route to wider access to Higher Education) and pedagogical agendas (WBL as an educational development).

Other authors (e.g. Brennan and Little, 1996) interested in the issues that have contributed to the development of WBL in the Higher Education sector have found a similar range of antecedents that fall into the five main categories of: economic competitiveness, skills and competence development, lifelong learning, educational and funding initiatives and accessibility and flexibility of Higher Education provision.

Within this conducive climate, Work Based Learning Studies (WBLS) emerged by Middlesex University which had the necessary regulatory framework in place with the introduction of the Common Academic Framework (1993), a set of University regulations for all the taught University programmes that facilitated the innovative features of WBLS. Apart from the regulatory framework, Middlesex University - as Portwood and Garnett (2000) note - had also the philosophical commitment in place that was related to the willingness to accept that learning at higher education level can be gained outside the library or the classroom and can be assessed and quantified in academic terms. Accreditation provided the mechanism to root the proposed work based programme firmly on learning gained from work.

A work based learning programme includes four main stages (modules). The first stage is Recognition and Accreditation of Learning (RAL), which is not a simple review of prior learning, but it is a forward-looking, career oriented instrument that assists students in reaching their future goals (Doncaster, 2000) and develops their reflective thinking. The second stage is the Learning Agreement that requires the active participation of the employer which makes the programme really a work based one. According to Garnett (2000), a Learning Agreement provides a mechanism not only for the academic validation of individually customised programmes of study, but also for meeting the needs of the employer, the individual learner and the University.

Armsby (2000) notes that research methodologies (third stage) allow students to become familiar with a range of practitioner/researcher methodologies to be applied on “real” research and development projects related to “real” pragmatic and applied activities. Research methods and project modules in WBLS have brought together and further developed methods and research and development issues that are appropriate for work. Armsby and Costley (2000) note that the aim of these modules is to develop critical awareness of research issues and practical competence in applying them. The final work based project aims to develop personal and professional practice by R&D and to discover and develop the knowledge embedded in that practice. According to Garnett (2001), the WBL project demonstrates the ability to create and apply work based knowledge and provides the company with a significant in-house research and development capacity, as students are required to undertake R&D projects relevant to their current work role and of wider interest within the organisation i.e. knowledge creation within bounded rationality enhancing human and structural capital of the organisation.

Knowledge is traditionally defined by educationalists and imparted to students using specific learning outcomes. However, Costley (2000) argues that WBLS recognises bodies of knowledge that are outside the university and derived through a multidimensional and interprofessional, work based frame of reference. The knowledge of WBL includes unrestricted knowledge that is concerned more with the process of practitioner led development and management of knowledge. The construction of knowledge outside of the university means (Costley, 2000) that learning must take place in a way that is more associated with andragogy (self-direction of learning) than pedagogy (being taught by teachers).

Costley (2000) emphasizes that in order to understand the knowledge content in WBLS, we should always have in mind that the awards offered are *in* WBL and not *by* WBL, which means that the university does not set appropriate criteria for a predetermined award, but each award is negotiated through a learning agreement which also includes the negotiation of learning outcomes. New knowledge for both the individual and the organisation comes not only through the work based projects but also through the enhancement of project management and the methodological skills of the participants. This is a distinctive contribution WBL makes to the knowledge relevant to the individual and to the organisation.

The key interest of the National Centre in its various partnerships with organisations is in the areas of knowledge management, intellectual capital and organisational learning (Costley, 2000). Knowledge management within an organisation is about the way knowledge is developed and directed to enable information to be generated that will lead to effective action taking. Efficient knowledge management allows the best use of human resources. Companies use WBL to increase their intellectual capital. According to Garnett (2001), an effective illustration is the case of Bovis Ltd that approached NCWBLP seeking to enhance its structural (course) and human (course participants) capital via the use of the accreditation structures of the university. Middlesex accredited the company's Management Development Programme and contributed towards the development of a postgraduate scheme for managers which would have to incorporate the "core competencies" that identified by the company as a source of organisational learning. This partnership has also enhanced the university's intellectual capital by providing a model of partnership based around organisational core competencies.

A personal benefit from the participation in a WBL programme is the university award and personal sense of achievement along with personal and career development which on an organisational basis lead to improved staff morale, greater managerial flexibility and understanding of the value of training and development etc. All these benefits can further lead to financial business benefits. Martins-Ferreira (1999) surveyed students who had completed BA/MA (WBL) awards at least two years before. It was found that students undertaking work based projects got more involved in how organisation works and how they could make changes to systems or processes and manage them more effectively. A similar survey by Comerford (1997) revealed that staff who had undertaken the WBL programmes understood the organisation's objectives more fully after they had completed the programme.

## 2.5 WORK BASED LEARNING: APPLICATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

According to Boud et al (2001) work based learning is the term being used to describe a class of university programmes that bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces. There is a wide variation in the mix of elements they include, ranging from little more than a lightly tailored version of an existing course delivered in the workplace with some work-related assessment activities to programmes which focus more closely on the needs of learning in work. WBL programmes typically share

the following characteristics: partnership between an external organisation and an educational institution; learners involved are employees of the external organisation; work is the curriculum; recognition of current competencies and identification of the learning learners wish to engage in; work based projects are undertaken in the workplace and the educational institution assesses the learning outcomes of the negotiated programmes with respect to a framework of standards and levels.

Work based learning as a new and radical approach to learning provides a framework with many creative possibilities and it can be used in various forms apart from the typical one i.e. corporation-university partnership. Three practical applications from the UK experience are presented below:

Work based learning was applied in a community of practice outside the university (e.g. small companies, groups within large organisations and groups with a common interest) through an initiative funded by the Department for Employment and Education. The project was well-perceived by the participants but according to Garner and Portwood (2000) the following conditions need to be met to achieve maximum results: the university team must be experienced in this kind of work; employers and senior managers need to be involved actively and funding is a crucial issue for the success of the project.

The second application of the work based learning has to do with the programmes of study throughout the university. Some universities implement WBL entirely by this means but at Middlesex University the drive has come principally through the field of work based learning studies the use of which by undergraduate students in almost any subject discipline is expanding. Kennedy (2000) notes that an increasing number of subject areas are now more aware of the advantages it offers in recruiting mature students and in providing programmes which incorporate learning that is relevant to the students' career aspirations and more specific to their interests.

Light (2000) presents another work based learning application and shows how WBL can be a means by which local people, often in need of extra support systems, access the university curriculum. She looks at the successful Middlesex University – London Borough of Enfield partnership and concludes that work based learning, and especially the initial recognition of

learning process, can contribute to changing existing societal perceptions and structures of work by accrediting devalued and undervalued experiential learning. In this way, people improve their job and career chances where they actually live.

We have presented the distinctive features, unique benefits and differing applications of work based learning. This innovative educational philosophy is still at its infancy and there are many different directions in which it might develop. Its fortunes depend on what is made of it by interested parties i.e. the State, universities and major companies within their network. According to Portwood and Costley (2000) the Government in the United Kingdom does not seem fully convinced by the improvements in the employability of students and upgrading of workers achieved through investing in WBL projects as it has set up and supported a new initiative (Learndirect), while it seems to favour a lifelong learning concept that avoids the focused claims of WBL. Universities are not that enthusiastic about the new market opportunities and new means of transmitting knowledge offered by WBL and prefer to opt for the less clear-cut lifelong learning concept. Major companies are receptive to any means, which enable enhancement of their intellectual capital in order to achieve financial success and are increasingly looking elsewhere or are making their own provision through such developments as corporate university.

Corporate universities embrace the use of high-tech delivery channels, attempt to align knowledge management with profits and achieve genuine integration of employee and employer learning objectives. According to Adams (2001), it is believed that there are some 1,600 of corporate universities in the world with well-known examples, including Motorola, Cisco (USA) and Unipart (UK). Another example that undermines WBL's credibility is the introduction of workplace learning as a concept in off-campus teaching. Rose et al (2001) describe workplace learning as an evolution of lifelong learning that appears to strike a balance between traditional teaching and work based learning. Workplace learning differs from WBL by working with cohorts as in "traditional" or "formal" education but the bulk of the instruction lies within the workplace. Stoney (2002) emphasizes that one of the most ambitious examples of workplace learning undertaken in the UK is the development of the BSc in Computer Science. This course is now being delivered part-time to 500 British Telecommunications employees by the London University's Queen Mary and Westfield College.

It is therefore obvious that support to the work based learning within the university by the interested parties is not to be taken for granted. Actually, as Portwood and Costley (2000) underline, for the work based learning concept to flourish the formulation of an ideology is an extremely important and urgent task.

This chapter has dealt with the concept of marketing higher education and has examined the emergence, features, benefits, applications and perspectives of the innovative higher education concept of work based learning. The latter has generated a few questions we need to bring forward to our analysis in relation to our context such as: Can WBL be applied in Greece the way it has been applied in the UK? Can WBL deliver its benefits for individuals and organisations the way it has been described above? Before attempting to find answers to these questions, we need to examine how the Greek Centre can excel by concentrating on its competitive advantage. This can only be achieved through the implementation of key strategic management principles.



# 3

## **STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

### 3.1 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter attempts to introduce the concept of strategic management from the business world to education administrators as a method to respond to increasing challenges in their environment. First of all, it tries to establish a definition for this concept. Strategic management is concerned with the overall direction of an organisation and as such it is a vital and complex management activity. Finlay (2000) defines strategic management as: “The process of managing the mix of goals and strategic pathways - a pattern of actions (the means) used to attain a strategic goal (an end) - that serve to define what the organisation is (or wishes to be), where it’s going, when it wants to get there and how in general it is to get there. It also includes the processes of monitoring and controlling the strategy of the organisation” (p.16).

There are three levels of strategic management – the corporate, the business and the non-profit organisation. The first level is seeking to answer the questions “What businesses should we be in? / Which competencies do we need to develop”, while the second’s main concern has to do with the questions “How do we compete? / Which capabilities do we need to develop?”. These levels refer to profit-seeking organisations that are to generate returns to shareholders by converting inputs to something of higher value. However, even universities are “in the business” of converting academic staff time, lecture room facilities etc into a learning environment and the term “business” will be applied equally to their activities. According to Finlay (2000), non-profit organisations should be in the business of adding value, even if not

creating profits and put a greater emphasis on the question “How do we develop and maintain good relationships with stakeholders”.

Boldt (1991) points out that strategic management is not traditional long-range planning, but is action oriented and is about the allocation of resources. Therefore, strategic management is practised not by planners, but by chief executive officers or general managers in business and by vice-chancellors and deans in universities. As in business, the process of strategic management in universities is to:

- Define the present mission and strategy.
- Analyse the external environment and competitive situation with particular emphasis on threats and opportunities.
- Analyse and evaluate the internal values, strengths and weaknesses of the organisation.
- Redefine the strategy as necessary.
- Allocate resources to implement the strategy.

The similarities between the process of strategic management in universities and business are spectacular. In fact, much of the thinking now being used in universities is taken directly from business practices. In both universities and businesses, the fundamental strategic issue requiring action-oriented decisions is: How do we best allocate the resources to build on the strengths which will both minimise the threats and capitalise on the opportunities in the environment enabling us to compete successfully in the market?

Although the basic concepts of strategic management in universities and business are similar, there are substantial differences in their application. In reality, the process of strategic management is more difficult in a university than in business for the following main reasons:

- The profit motive in business is not present in universities. The mission of a university includes teaching, research and service and, unlike business, has little profit orientation. The evaluation of a university's performance (“bottom line” or profitability in business) is more subjective and is difficult to measure with any degree of accuracy.
- Faculty tenure restricts freedom. In the business world, the withdrawal of product lines, closing of plants and laying off employees can be readily made and implemented but universities are usually required to go through long and complex procedures to close

programmes and/or dismiss faculty either for poor performance or because a viable need for a programme no longer exists.

- Faculty power limits central authority. Unlike business managers who hold authority as well as responsibility, university managers are frequently in the position of “first among equals”. Management decision-making in a university may be accomplished within the faculty senate or in administrative and faculty committees. Thus, with the authority for programmes diffused, it is very difficult for most universities to reach and implement tough strategic decisions. This is even more obvious in the case of state universities, which must obtain the approval of the state authorities to change their status (research, doctoral granting etc) or to add or drop schools and programmes.

It has to be noted at this point that the GCWBLP does not face these constraints as it enjoys a great level of autonomy. The academic director manages the Centre on a day-to-day basis and formulates and implements strategic decisions easily and rapidly. Certain key decisions (i.e. tuition fees increment) need to be taken after consultation with NCWBLP, but overall the academic director has full control over the revenues and expenditures thus enabling a Centre’s “bottom line” to be established and evaluated. However, this independence of the Greek Centre has been set in the context of dependence from the National Centre in terms of the curriculum, quality assurance, regulations, making awards and other elements that affect the quality of the programmes offered.

The basic concepts of strategic management from the business world are of great value to university administrators in responding to serious threats in their environment. Strategic management is very important for the success, or even survival of a university as it enables universities to overcome these threats. University chancellors are now increasing the use of strategic management techniques despite the difficulties in implementing these business concepts in universities.

### 3.2 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND THE GCWBLP

My overall aim now is to apply the strategic management process to the GCWBLP. My objectives will therefore be to define the mission, evaluate strategic options and identify the most suitable strategic option that will enable the Centre to achieve organisational growth and development.

### 3.2.1 MISSION

At the corporate level, organisations need to consider the reasons for their existence and how they intend to achieve their objectives over a specific period of time. At the business level, strategy involves consideration of the external environment and how the organisation can achieve a competitive advantage. It has become generally accepted over the years by both academics and practitioners that a vital starting point for these strategic considerations is the formulation of a mission statement.

Kotler and Fox (1995) defined mission as the “basic purpose of an institution; that is, what it is trying to accomplish” (p.150). Every institution will highly benefit by deciding what its mission will be, or it may confuse it with its goals or its vision. Goals are major variables that the institution will emphasize, such as enrolment, reputation, market share and profitability. According to Snyder et al (1994) vision is a reality that has not yet come to be. The difference between a mission and a vision is that the mission is about behaviour and actions for the immediate future; a vision sketches out a much longer-term future, perhaps even an ideal that can never be achieved. The vision is likely to enter the mission as one of the strategic goals of the organisation or as one of its main values. Middlesex University has defined its mission with the following statement:

*Middlesex will be a student-centred university that will provide opportunities for life long learning to a diverse range of students within a culture of scholarship and development of knowledge.*

The vision for Middlesex is of a university characterised by its commitment to: extending access to higher education and lifelong learning; ensuring education of a high quality and standard; developing high-class research that supports learning; meeting the needs of its region through teaching, learning and research; providing a strong international outlook; valuing and respecting its staff; involving staff and students in its decision-making processes; promoting equality of opportunity, openness, freedom of expression and social responsibility and advancing economic, social and cultural participation for all. The mission of School of Lifelong Learning and Education (LLE) that offers the WBLS programmes through the NCWBLP has been defined as follows:

*The School, with its partner organisation, is committed to providing opportunities of the highest quality for lifelong learners to initiate, develop and enhance their capability for life and work.*

Johnstone (1988) claims that the mission statement should be clear, easily communicated, acceptable to the faculty and the governing authorities, forward looking and challenging. It should not be so universal that it could have been written for any university and not so bland that it fails to inspire or lead. It should avoid specificity that may soon be dated out but it should not be surprising or highly controversial. Research by David (1989) into the content of mission statements revealed nine components: products or services, customers, philosophy, self-concept, public image, location, technology, employees and concern for survival.

A helpful approach to defining mission is to establish the institution's scope along the dimensions of consumer groups (who is to be served and satisfied), consumer needs (what is to be satisfied) and technologies (how consumer needs are to be satisfied). Applying this approach to the GCWBLP, we can easily identify the consumer groups as all the working professionals with significant working experience in their respective fields, the consumer needs as the needs to acquire higher education awards and the technologies as work based learning through the recognition and accreditation of previous learning and development of new knowledge through project-based activity.

It is understood that the mission statement preparation is usually a process that involves the work of a high level committee and should pass a series of checkpoints before the mission statement is complete. However in our case, the process has been much shorter due to the small size of the GCWBLP.

Taking into consideration the above several characteristics of the mission statement and the mission statements of Middlesex University and School of LLE and after a number of brainstorming sessions with the academic director, we came up with a mission statement for the Greek Centre.

Here is the final version of our mission statement:

## GCWBLP – Mission Statement

*The Greek Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships is committed, through the award winning philosophy of work based learning exclusively developed by Middlesex University, to providing opportunities of the highest quality for qualified working professionals to build academic qualifications based on learning from and related to their jobs, interests or private study and for corporations to achieve business benefits through enhancement of their intellectual capital, creation of new knowledge and effective knowledge management.*

The above mission statement is clear, feasible, distinctive, motivating, and easy to understand and describes what the GCWBLP stands for and whom it will serve. It is also market driven as it involves the understanding of the needs and wants of customers (individuals and corporations) in the market. This statement should be adequate for a period of time but the Centre should review its mission occasionally and reconsider it if it no longer works or if it no longer defines an optimal course of action for the Centre to follow.

The identification of the GCWBLP mission indicates that the first phase in the strategic management process is complete. The second phase involves both external and internal analyses to determine the GCWBLP strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis its competitors and the opportunities and threats it faces in its environment. The construction of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) table is a concise statement of the situation in which the GCWBLP is in and provides a useful springboard for the identification of the strategy to be adopted in the future.

### 3.2.2 S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

The first attempt to identify strengths and weaknesses for the GCWBLP was made back in 1998 (1997-8 Greek Centre Report, February 1999) by the academic director. Most of the strengths (such as uniqueness/innovation of the WBL, Queen's Prize for the work of the National Centre, successful partnership with Interamerican etc) still stand, while most of the weaknesses (such as development of promotion and teaching material in Greek, recruitment and training of advisors and assessors for the delivery of the programmes etc) have been successfully addressed. The following S.W.O.T. analysis –which was developed in

consultation with the academic director - has updated the above-mentioned list of internal strengths and weaknesses to reflect the current situation and has identified a list of external opportunities / threats that can be used to the GCWBLP's advantage / need to guard against.

## STRENGTHS

- a. Work based learning is a new, unique way of study that is ideal for professionals due to its distinctive advantages with the most important to be the accreditation of prior and work based learning.
- b. The GCWBLP is the only Centre in Greece that offers WBL programmes
- c. The Queen's prize for the work of the NCWBLP.
- d. Programmes can be studied / followed in any city and in the offices of any company in Greece should the minimum student number requirement be satisfied.
- e. Programmes can commence any time a group of students is formed.
- f. The success of the first partnerships of the Centre secures good reference for further partnerships in the future.
- g. The presence of the University in Greece (through the Greek academic director of the Centre) safeguards the quality of the programmes.
- h. The presence of an experienced core advisor/assessor team warrants tutoring and advising of high academic standards.
- i. Lower tuition fees (payable in five instalments) in comparison to other postgraduate programmes delivered in Greece.
- j. Possibility of undertaking a postgraduate course without a bachelor's award should the professional has had extensive working experience of responsibility (if not managerial) in the field of his/her expertise.
- k. Possibility of conducting real life (applied) projects of high value to individuals and organisations.

## WEAKNESSES

- a. The work based learning studies does not provide subject based theoretical knowledge and does not require students to pass exams thus establishing a perception that WBL awards are "easy" to be obtained.

- b. Low awareness of the WBL concept creates a level of scepticism regarding its ability to provide academic qualifications of equal standards to those awarded by the conventional mode of study.
- c. A large number of professionals (past WBL graduates and candidates for the programmes) have expressed the point of view that WBL should be treated as a mode of study and not as a field of study.
- d. WBS set documentation requires revision to enable easy perception by the students with the most urgent need to be the improvement for the booklet on research methodology (module 3/4825).
- e. The current promotional material should be updated to reflect the quality, standard and status of the professionals aiming to recruit.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- a. Strong demand for postgraduate qualifications by senior professionals whose educational needs are primarily the recognition of existing knowledge as well as the acquisition of new knowledge.
- b. Strong demand from organisations for the development of their intellectual (knowledge and human) capital and the potential to use work based learning as an approach to knowledge development / management on organisational basis.
- c. The demand for academic qualifications by professionals from the insurance industry can capitalise on the successful partnership the Centre has already established.
- d. The possibility of acquiring full professional rights (i.e. in the fields of engineering, psychology etc) for EU - and apparently for Greece - through obtaining academic qualifications from a British University.
- e. The WBL programme financing by public sector companies (e.g. Electricity Corporation) for their employees increases the programme's credibility and usefulness among the public sector companies.
- f. The establishment by the governing bodies of minimum academic requirements for financial consultants that trade in the Stock Exchange
- g. The solid basis of Middlesex University Greek graduates who may be interested in pursuing postgraduate courses.
- h. The on going discussion on lifelong learning establishes a positive background for new concepts (i.e. work based learning) to grow.



## THREATS

- a. The Greek Government official body (Dikatsa) does not recognise any academic qualifications obtained from foreign Universities through courses conducted in Greece as – according to the Constitution - only locally based Universities are permitted to provide higher education services. The recognition of the award is necessary in almost all the public sector companies.
- b. The entry of the Applied Learning Evaluation Centre that claims to be “a leading provider of distance and on-line degree programmes (which recognise experiential learning) at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate Levels through cooperation with Universities located in the United States of America and the European Union”.
- c. The entry of Institution d’ Etudes Francophones (IdEF) and the public University Paris 13 that provide bachelor degree programmes (conducted in English or French) in 18 months for professionals working in the banking and insurance sectors.

The above list of opportunities and threats has been prepared by taking into consideration our view of the educational environment the Centre will operate in the medium to long term. Listing of opportunities will help the Greek Centre to prioritise them for immediate action in the short term or for longer-term consideration. In order to prioritise, we will have to consider which opportunities will be lost if they are not grasped relatively quickly and which ones the Centre can afford to develop more slowly. Having identified certain potential threats, it is important to take action to avoid them and, better still, to turn such threats into opportunities. Some of these are national issues (i.e. non-recognition by Dikatsa) and therefore difficult for the Greek Centre to deal with, but it is a threat every non-state higher education institute faces in Greece and therefore its impact is rather minimal.

The strategic position of the GCWBLP vis-à-vis its environment and its competitors has been considered and encapsulated in the above SWOT analysis. My next task is to evaluate alternative strategic options and choose the strategic pathway taking into consideration the above analysis and the mission statement of the Centre.

### 3.2.3 STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The central element for an organisation to identify its strategic options is the portfolio of offers (products/services). It must decide on the number and range of offers and thus on the possibilities of expanding its present offers or reducing them. Educational institutions often find that they have many programmes and expectations from them but limited resources. They must choose which programmes will receive emphasis and which may need to be combined or dropped. Making decisions about current major programmes constitutes an academic portfolio strategy (Kotler and Fox, 1995). GCWBLP offers only one programme that of the WBL studies in undergraduate and postgraduate levels and obviously there is no need for portfolio review. The identification and evaluation of strategic choices will be based on the single current offer: the WBL programmes.

Kotler and Fox (1995) suggest an easy way for an educational institution to visualise its strategic options in terms of the programmes and market opportunities, which is presented in the following matrix.

		P R O G R A M M E S		
		Existing	Modified	New
M A R K E T S	Existing	<u>1. Market Penetration</u> Intensify promotion & recruitment of existing markets for existing programmes	<u>4. Programme Modification</u> New schedules (weekend, evening), improvement of facilities	<u>7. Programme Innovation</u> Develop new programmes, majors, courses
	Geographical	<u>2. Geographical Expansion</u> Open a branch to offer the same programmes	<u>5. Modification for Dispersed Markets</u> Offer programmes in distant locations	<u>8. Geographical Innovation</u> Find ways to serve new markets (distance learning, e-learning etc)
	New	<u>3. Market Development</u> Locate new markets for current programmes	<u>6. Service Modification for New Markets</u> Special courses for new markets	<u>9. Total Innovation</u> New programmes for new markets

Figure 1 Programme / market opportunity matrix

The above matrix encourages the decision makers to think in terms of both existing and new programmes and existing and new markets. Analytically, cell 1 refers to the strategy of deepening the penetration into the existing market with the existing programmes. This strategy is effective only if the existing market is not saturated yet. Cell 2 raises the question of identifying new geographical markets for expansion (i.e. open branch in a new city) with the existing programmes. Market development is the strategy under which an institution will offer the existing programmes to new markets that need to be identified.

The next three strategies consider the programme modification as their main element. Under option 4 the University should modify its current programmes to attract more students from the existing market. The next option is associated with modifying the programmes to enable geographical expansion in distant locations (i.e. overseas). This strategy is advisable if the local market opportunities have been fully exploited. A realistic growth opportunity for many Universities is the programme modification for new markets. Summer courses that are offered by a number of Universities (Middlesex University inclusive) is a good example of this growth opportunity.

The last three strategic options are innovation based and are related to programme innovation (option 7), geographic innovation (option 8) and total innovation (option 9). Programme innovation means developing new courses and departments to attract students from the existing markets. Geographic innovation involves finding new ways to serve new geographical areas. Distance learning or courses via computer links are good examples of the geographic innovation. The last strategic option (total innovation) has to do with offering new programmes to new markets. Two total innovation examples are the concept of “universities without walls” with a number of them established during the last ten years and the continuing education programmes or weekend completion programmes.

Generally speaking, moving from cell 1 to cell 9 is a progression from low risk/low return to high risk/high return although Universities seldom take risks and usually prefer to do more of their familiar activities. The above matrix can be applied to any educational establishment as a vehicle for opportunities and strategy identification and it obviously can be applied to the GCWBLP as well. It is my intention now to evaluate the various opportunities the Centre faces and consequently to formulate the future strategy.

### 3.2.4 STRATEGIC CHOICE

The above established GCWBLP mission and organisational position (as determined in the S.W.O.T. analysis) will provide the focus within which search for an appropriate strategic route (one out of the previously presented opportunities) should take place.

In our effort to explore the GCWBLP strategic options, we will be assisted by one concept that can be applied to three different areas. It is the life cycle concept, which it will be applied to the institution (GCWBLP), product (WBL) and market (higher education for professionals). According to Kotler and Fox (1995), educational institutions tend to pass through the life cycle stages and an educational institution should consider its current life cycle stage and its potential for continued adaptation, since adaptability may help to prolong each stage or produce new life cycles. The figure below shows the four main stages in the life cycle of a typical institution or of the GCWBLP for the purpose of our analysis. It should be mentioned that the Centre's life cycle stages are identical to the product (WBL) life cycle stages, which also start with the product introduction and move on to the growth stage.

#### *Sales*

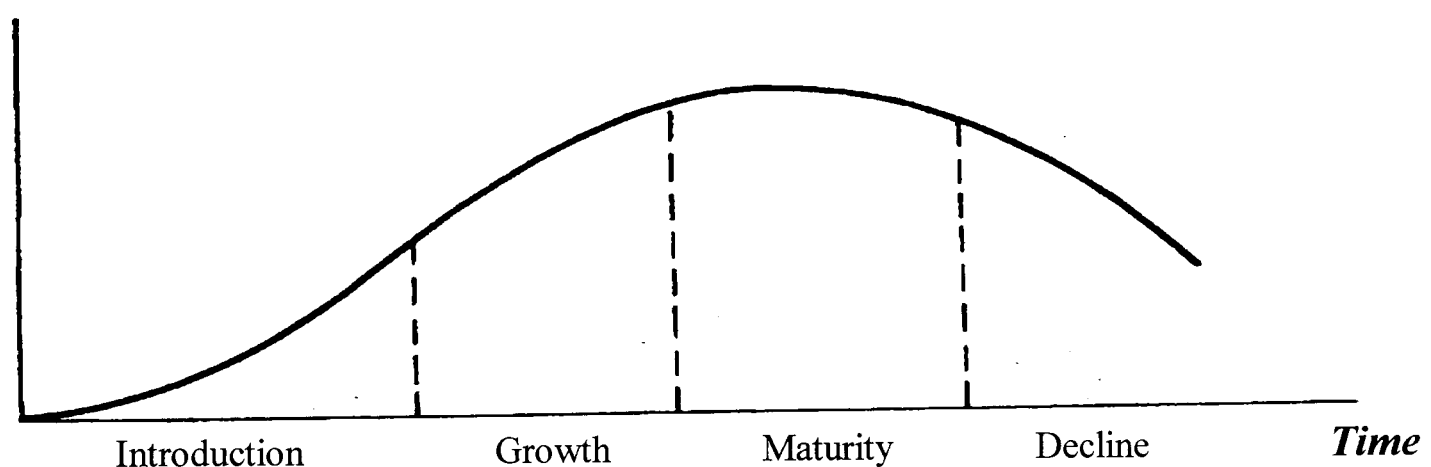


Figure 2 Typical S-shaped life cycle curve

The GCWBLP and the WBL studies entered their introduction stage in 1997 (foundation year) and they are still growing within the same stage. The growth rates of the last few years indicate that constant growth has not yet been achieved. However, it appears that we are currently approaching the end of the introductory stage for both the Centre and the service provided and we should be moving towards the growth stage. The strategic option to be

identified must enable the Centre and the WBL to move on to growth stages and enjoy prolonged and healthy growth rates. The next issue for consideration is the market life cycle.

Gibbs and Knapp (2002) indicate that the introductory stage of the market life cycle refers to the emerging market, which is a new market triggered by an innovation that offers a perceived and superior benefit. Initial sales grow mainly in learners keen to be seen as leaders. Next stage is characterised by high growth, new learner segments and offers of similar services. Growth is followed by maturity in the market with price and service becoming important as capacity to sustain all players. The final phase of the market development is the decline where volumes are set for permanent decline and new products / users need to be identified. GCWBLP is the only Centre in Greece that markets the innovative concept of WBL (as previously mentioned-SWOT analysis) and it has created its own market segment within the higher education market for professionals. It is therefore understood that this new market segment is an emerging market that offers a unique proposition.

In summary, the life cycle analysis indicate that GCWBLP as an educational institution is at its introductory stage and offers services which are about to enter the growth stage (sales wise) in a market that is still at its emerging phase. The contribution of this statement in our strategic management process is very valuable. Both the SWOT and life cycle analysis are extremely helpful tools in my effort to evaluate the possible strategic options and come up with the most appropriate one.

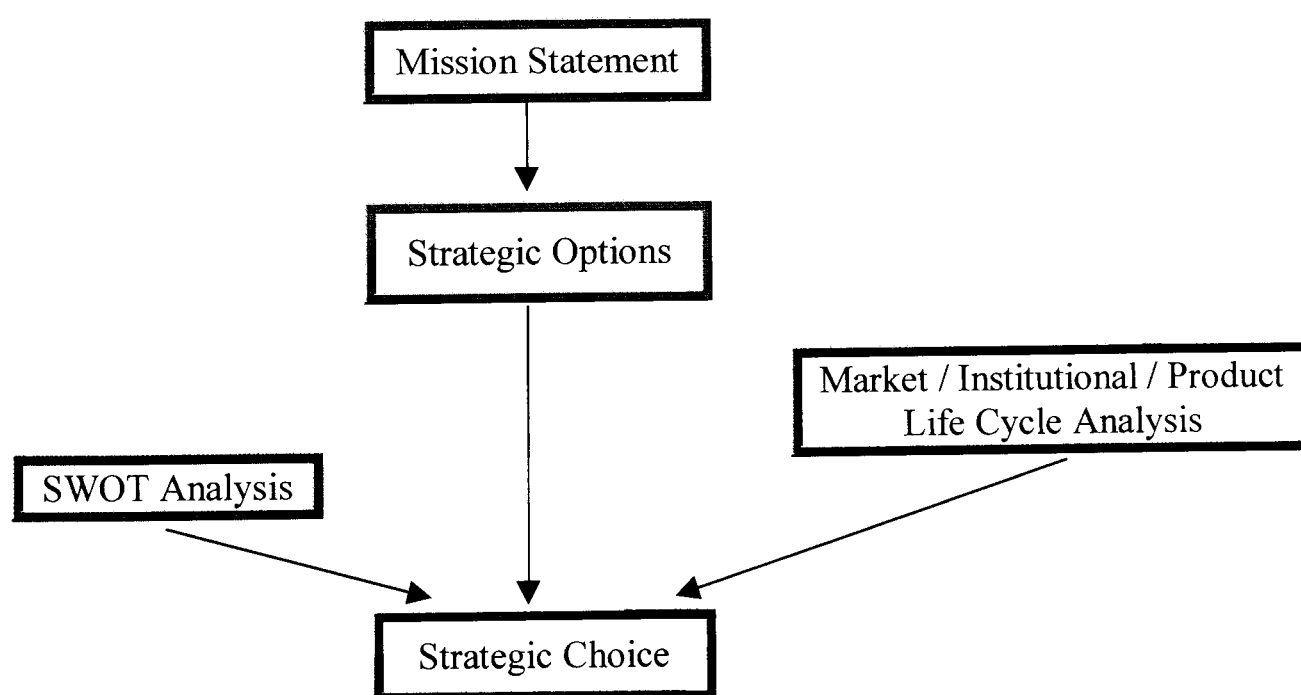


Figure 3 Suitable strategic choice identification procedure

Figure 3 shows how all the presented elements (mission statement, SWOT analysis, strategic options, market / institutional / product / market life cycles are interrelated to help identify the most suitable strategic choice.

Let's now proceed with the evaluation of the 9 possible strategic options for the Centre as identified in the previously presented matrix. The life cycle analysis revealed that both the Centre and work based learning concept operate in their introductory stage in an emerging market. In other words, efforts will be concentrated around the existing portfolio and obviously the "innovation" concept should not be considered at all. Consequently, strategies that call for programme, geographic or total innovation are out of our consideration.

The next question to be raised is: Shall we consider programme modification as our strategic choice? There are three possible scenarios. Programme modification can be mainly implemented with introduction of new schedules or facilities. Our expertise verifies that students are able to follow the current schedules and timetables and possible modification will not provide any tangible benefits. The Centre provides no facilities (residential, library etc) and obviously the programme modification through facilities improvement does not exist as a possible route. However, the currently delivered programmes can be enhanced by adding seminars (accredited or not) to target specific groups. For example, seminars on stock exchange financial analysis can be incorporated in a programme tailor made for investment consultants under the general award title MA in WBL (Finance). Marketers apply a similar approach (product relaunch) to improve the image and performance of a product by adding new attributes/claims or by modifying its packaging. This marketing strategy is the most appropriate course of action when a product enters the maturity stage of its life cycle. As previously shown, the WBL programmes are currently approaching their growth stage of the life cycle and obviously no programme modification is an option in the immediate future (next academic year). However, it should be noted that this programme enhancement could be a potential option in the future, but this possibility will be further discussed in the three-year marketing plan proposal.

The second scenario refers to modification for dispersed markets i.e. to offer modified programmes in distant locations in Greece. This is an option that can be considered only after the modified programmes have been successfully marketed in the existing markets. However,

as the latter is not an immediate strategic option, modification for dispersed markets is out of our strategic options consideration as well. The final modification scenario is associated with special courses developed for new markets. The market (qualified working professionals who want to obtain academic qualifications based on learning from their jobs, interests or private study) and programme nature (work based learning) are clearly defined in the mission statement and leave very limited room for this strategy to be considered as an option. However, the mission statement - as we mentioned before - may be reviewed from time to time, if it no longer defines an optimal course for the GCWBLP to follow. A possible mission statement revision in the future may enable us to offer - on top of the WBL programmes - for example a “professional M.B.A. programme” for senior executives with recognition and accreditation of work based learning as one of the programme modules. This new programme - a completely different one from the courses we offer today - refers to programme modification aimed at new markets but it can only be considered as a mid-term option (i.e. after a period of two years). This option offers growth possibilities that will have to be taken into serious consideration in our three-year marketing plan proposal, which is presented in Chapter 7.

We are left with three possible choices to consider and all have to do with the existing programmes. We need to find an answer to the question: How do we develop the existing programmes? There are three possible avenues: To open a branch in another city (geographical expansion), to locate new markets for the programmes (market development), and to intensify promotion of existing programmes in existing markets (market penetration).

The Centre has conducted the programmes in a number of cities outside Athens before. Groups of insurance agents (Interamerican partnership) from Larisa, further education teachers of Technological Educational Institutes (TEI partnerships) from Chalkis and Heraklion had the opportunity to complete their studies based on their own hometowns without visiting the GCWBLP premises at all. The Centre has also ventured outside Greece by establishing a partnership with Interlife (Interamerican Group) of Cyprus with satisfactory results. In all the above cases, Athens is the base with the advisors team to travel to deliver lectures and supervise projects. This mode of programmes delivery has been working very well and has also proven to be cost effective. On long-term basis (maturity stage) a small representative office (for example in Thessaloniki) may be a possible strategic option for

further geographical expansion, but for the time being there is no need for a permanent base (branch) in another city and obviously the geographical expansion for existing programmes becomes the next choice to be erased from our potential short-term options.

Market development and market penetration are the choices to consider. The questions are: Can we further grow if we intensify promotion in the existing markets? Can we locate new markets for our programmes? The answers are “YES” to both questions. The programmes (still at the introductory stage as per product life cycle) have huge potential to draw new students from the existing markets, which are in the emerging phase. We can definitely locate new markets, (i.e. various companies or unions etc) which have never been approached before and provide reliable opportunities for recruitment.

It seems that the last two are the only options the GCWBLP should consider for its strategic development on a short-term basis. The conclusion is:

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIC CHOICE
MARKET PENETRATION MARKET DEVELOPMENT
MID-TERM STRATEGIC CHOICE
PROGRAMME MODIFICATION

The identified strategic choices are suitable responses to the market trends and organisational position, are in line with our mission statement and are absolutely feasible, as they do not require additional resources to be obtained for their implementation. We have so far identified the strategic pathway the GCWBLP should follow to achieve organisational growth and development. Market penetration and market development can be achieved by marketing and promoting the WBL studies more intensively than before. New data will have to be gathered to provide the feedback for effective WBL studies marketing. Research needs to be conducted to collect the necessary data.

My next priority therefore will be to fully establish my research activity focus. To do so, I will have to clearly define the assumptions and hypotheses, stipulate the research questions, identify the project aims and objectives and explain the research methodology (families, approaches, techniques) to be applied in order to achieve these aims and objectives.



# 4

## THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 RESEARCH VARIABLES AND QUESTIONS

The development of the research process and methodology is extremely important for the design, implementation, analysis, presentation and evaluation of the research project. Rudestam and Newton (2001) describe the research process as a long chain or a wheel that contains many links and are depicted in the following figure.

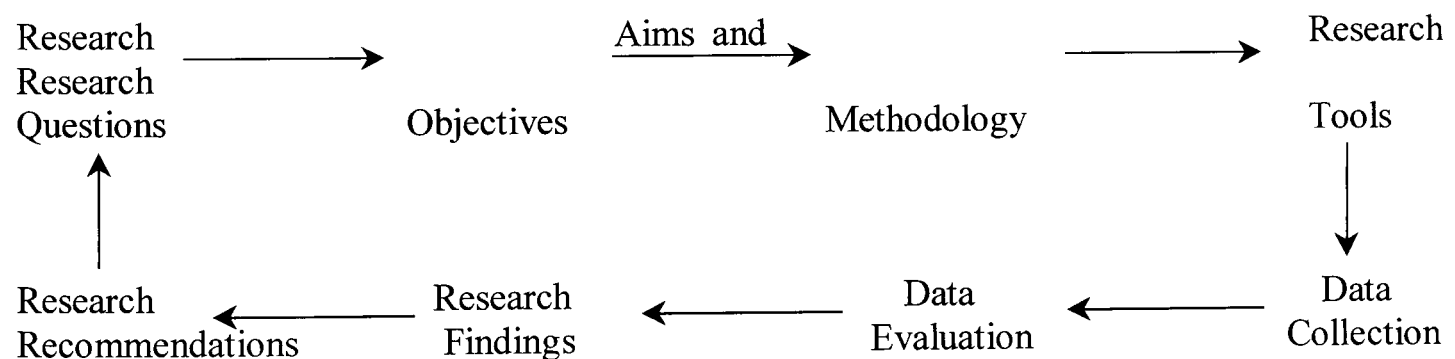


Figure 4 The research wheel

Choices at every link will have substantial effect on the rest of the chain. Link no 1 is undoubtedly the identification of the research questions. The questions will be later on transformed into aims and objectives, which will be explored through the selection of the most appropriate methodology and the most suitable tools for data collection. The data analysis and evaluation will deliver results that should meet the aims and objectives and

answer the research questions. My research recommendations may lead back to link No 1 with further questions raised that will be the starting point of a new research project. I am now in a position to establish the above described research process for my own research study but making every possible effort to develop each of the links of the research wheel starting with link No 1, the research questions. I can consider how to undertake my research only if I have fully identified my research questions.

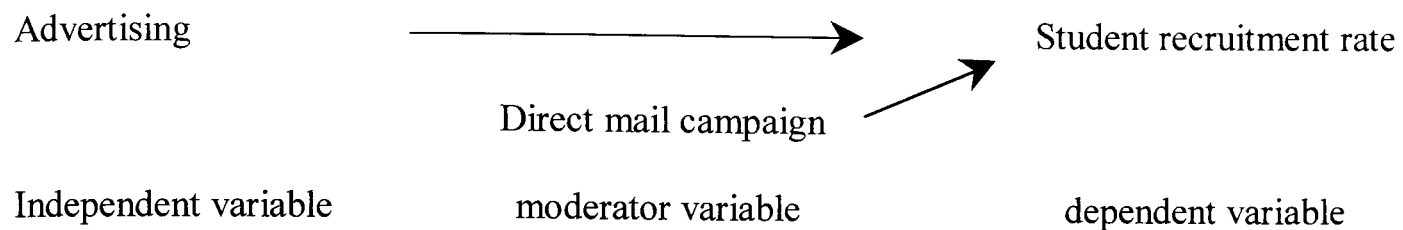
Researchable questions almost invariably involve the relationship between two or more variables, phenomena, concepts or ideas. Research studies generally consist of methods to explicate the nature of that relationship that may vary. Generating researchable questions begins with labelling one or two variables and generating a second, third etc. “Independent variable” is the one that is manipulated by the researcher while the effects of this manipulation are measured on one or more other variables that are called “dependent variables”. But even the presence of two variables is apt to be limiting and often it is only when a third “connecting” variable is introduced that an idea becomes researchable. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the term of “moderator” variable is often used to pinpoint the conditions under which an independent variable exerts its effects on a dependent variable and the term of “mediating” variable that describes how effects will occur by accounting for the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. There is no actual limit to the number of interesting questions that can be raised simply by introducing a third variable into the proposed study to explain the nature of the relationship between the primary variables.

The dependent variable in my research study is the recruitment rate for students who join the work based learning programmes in Greece. Advertising does influence this variable and it can be stipulated as my independent variable.

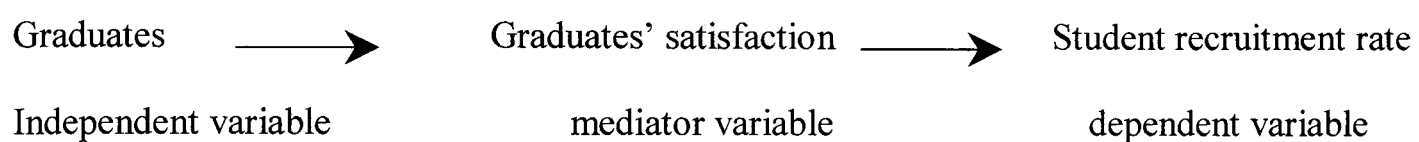


So the research question might be: What is the impact of advertising on student recruitment rates? The research interest in the above relationship can be further enhanced by listing variables that influence the relationship between the above two variables. Direct mail (a form of indirect advertising) can be one variable that influences the advertising - student

recruitment rate relationship. The research question is: What is the impact of advertising in the form of a direct mail campaign on the student recruitment rate?



Another relationship of high interest is the one between past graduates and their satisfaction from the WBL programmes and the student recruitment rate.



The research question might be expressed as follows: What is the role of past graduates and their satisfaction on the student recruitment rate? My research study will focus on more than the above identified independent variables that might influence the dependent one. The other independent variables will enable more research questions to be raised. The list of research questions is as follows:

- How the current and (expected) market condition of higher education for professionals in Greece affect the Greek Centre's development?
- What is the competition profile (players, courses offered) vs. our profile?
- Is our marketing literature at comparable level to that of competitors?
- Can the experience in promoting WBL programmes from UK contribute to the successful marketing of the same programmes in Greece?
- Can the identification of the current potential WBL student profile guide us to more effective marketing efforts?
- Are the WBL studies highly perceived by senior professionals?

The list can be even longer with several other variables to be considered and more questions to be established for research. By and large, my study will look at the above-mentioned questions and I believe that it will result in new research topics and new research questions to be answered.

At this point, it must be said that many research studies present hypotheses as a useful bridge between the research questions and the research methodology. Verma and Beard (1981) define hypotheses as tentative guesses or intuitive hunches about two things that are causally related and are most often used in research approaches that use an empirical or “scientific” concept (e.g. experiments). Generally speaking, hypotheses should be statistically tested and should help in developing the research framework and assist in guiding the choice of the research strategy. However, a researcher can get the same type of help not only from a list of hypotheses but also from a set of objectives. As my research does not intend to prejudge what causes what but rather it will investigate a range of possibilities about causal factors, and my decision is to proceed with making a statement of objectives instead of a list of hypotheses. After all, the important point is not so much whether there is hypothesis or not but whether I have carefully thought about what is / what is not worth investigating. Careful consideration of the previously defined research questions is essential to enable a number of feasible objectives to be identified.

## 4.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Precise statements of research aims and objectives are necessary to define the areas to be investigated and to enable the selection of the most appropriate methodology at later stage. My project has clear and specific aims, which are:

1. To design a long-term development strategy for the GCWBLP that will also contribute to its interim development. This strategy will have to implement the identified short-term and mid-term strategic options and to lead the Centre to its interim and long term development in line with its mission statement.
2. To provide Middlesex University and the GCWBLP Commercial Directors with a report for the GCWBLP’s growth. This report will be in the form of a three-year marketing plan that will specify the most suitable marketing approach and tools to be used in order the Centre to achieve its growth.
3. To contribute substantial knowledge in the area of marketing British higher education in Greece with emphasis on WBL programmes. My study will build upon the existing knowledge of marketing higher education (by focusing on WBL studies) in Greece

through providing updated data on market overview and size, competitors' profiles, marketing literature evaluation and identification of niche marketing opportunities.

4. To escalate my own professional capability to an advanced level. At the end of my doctoral study I aim to have increased my professional role understanding, advanced my research capabilities in the areas of high standard research and project development and accumulated substantial learning in the field of strategic management and development.
5. To enhance the existing high quality strategic development and marketing capabilities of GCWBLP. The strategic development and marketing capabilities of the Greek Centre, which are considered to be of high quality as it has successfully introduced and promoted WBL programmes, should be further enhanced after the completion of my doctoral project.

The above defined project aims will be fulfilled through the achievement of a number of objectives. Analytically, to fulfil aim no. 1 the following objectives must be accomplished:

1. To implement a number of marketing activities (advertising, editorials, presentations to companies and associations, direct mail etc) having agreed budgets with the Academic and Commercial Directors of GCWBLP and assess their impact on the student recruitment increase.
2. To seek and evaluate feedback from NCWBLP on promoting WBL programmes in the UK, Cyprus and Hong Kong.
3. To obtain a current profile of a potential individual WBL student to enable marketing of the WBL studies more effectively.
4. To evaluate perception of WBL studies, identify potential organisations as partners/clients for WBL programmes starting with banking and insurance companies and measure the outcomes on the recruitment.
5. To research the satisfaction level from past WBL graduates with the intention to take action (if necessary) to improve quality of the currently delivered programmes to result in improved recruitment level.

To achieve aim no. 2, the following objectives must be accomplished, while the input from the achievement of the above objectives will be used as well.

1. To identify the overall direction of the institution to respond to its markets and opportunities (institutional strategy) and
2. To develop a three-year plan with the objective of increasing student recruitment to achieve a 25% annual growth through this period. It has to be mentioned that the 25% annual growth rate (number of registered students per year vs. number of registered students the year before) has been set by the Directors of the GCWBLP in line with the previous targets of 20% annual growth for the years 1999-00 and 2000-01 mentioned above. This already set annual growth target influences my practice as a worker and at the same time defines my boundaries as a researcher in a situation where both my roles (worker, researcher) seem to have identical objectives.

A few objectives need to be pursued in order to achieve aim no. 3. These objectives are:

1. To consider present and estimate future market conditions for higher education for professionals in Greece (key players, courses offered, fees etc).
2. To assess the level of preparedness of the Greek market to perceive WBL applications and benefits the way they have been established in the UK.
3. To identify possible niche market segments to enable the successful WBL programmes promotion.
4. To evaluate the first ever produced (by the GCWBLP) brochure on WBL studies in Greek in comparison to marketing literature of other major higher education institutions.

Once aims no.1, 2 and 3 are achieved, both my professional and the GCWBLP's strategic development and marketing capabilities (i.e. aims no. 4 and 5) are fulfilled as well. The definition of clear aims and objectives enables the identification of the most suitable research methodology, which is presented in the following section.

#### 4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A work based researcher is very likely to have a dual role as both a researcher and an employee. This dual role makes relative influences that make it very important for the researcher to be reflexive in his/her research. According to Edwards and Potter (1992) reflexivity is work which includes self-criticism and alerts the individual to the human

subjective processes in undertaking research; warning the researcher that knowledge is relative to their own perspective.

I find myself also having a dual role as I am an advisor/tutor with full marketing responsibilities for the GCWBLP and at the same time I conduct my research activity within the GCWBLP's context. Generally speaking, the dual roles of an insider researcher may not be synonymous, but they may conflict with each other. In my case, both my worker's role (responsible for the marketing activities) and my researcher's role (research to specify potential students' profile, to evaluate graduates' satisfaction etc) have the same overall purpose: to identify ways to market the WBL studies more effectively than what we have done in the past. From this point of view, there is no conflict between the two roles or the two positions within the working environment. On the contrary, my worker's position provides me with the opportunity to undertake certain research activities (for example, meeting all the prospective students is a good opportunity to analyse their profile). Overall, my insider's role seems to empower me with the authority to carry out my research effectively without imposing any constraints, as I am fully aware of the working environment's culture.

My advantage as an insider researcher is that I have got the insider's knowledge of the problem/questions to be researched, sources of information, organisational context and key people. This pre-understanding could be a potential disadvantage as being too close to the problem, to information or to people may create a negative impact on the research's objectivity. My researcher's role should therefore ensure that certain preconceptions or bias about various issues developed through the worker's role would not influence at all the research development.

The insider researcher faces a range of influences from the work environment (context) that affect the selection of the research approach and tools to be employed. The main influences come from the organisational, the social and the practitioner contexts. My research is primarily a market research with significant research activity to be also conducted within the work environment (graduates / potential students). I have a good understanding of the organisational context that does not really influence my research methodology selection. The social context and a number of relevant parameters (i.e. product knowledge with its past performance and its potential, audience for my report) may also impact on the research

methodology development. This context in my case refers to a rather limited number of colleagues and superiors but the knowledge (to be) received from the Academic GCWBLP Director is very essential in my project development. The major influences from the practitioner context are my educational background, my professional experience and knowledge in the area of marketing and strategy and knowledge received from the relevant literature review. These influences have a certain impact on the selection of my research approach and tools. Having analysed the influences I am facing as an insider researcher, I can now proceed with the development of the general strategy (research family), tactics for the design of the research project (research approach) and tools for collecting and analysing data (research techniques), which I intend to apply to conduct my doctoral research project.

#### 4.3.1 RESEARCH FAMILIES

My research will initially involve both forms of quantitative and qualitative research families as I will be collecting and analysing information and data in both numeric and non-numeric forms. Data on the local higher education (for professionals) market conditions will be collected to enable quantitative (e.g. key players' size) and qualitative evaluation (e.g. courses offered). This information will be gathered from various sources (magazines, newspapers, industry reviews etc) and emphasis will be given to the number of students (professionals) attending postgraduate courses with the objective to establish a potential market (higher education for professionals) size and growth rate. It has to be mentioned here that the WBL programmes constitute a unique market segment that is separate from all the other taught courses and therefore no direct comparison can be made. However, useful results will be drawn from the qualitative and quantitative market presentation as it is highly possible that a professional may choose to attend either a WBL or a taught course.

My research on the impact of marketing literature, which is utilised by higher education institutions to attract students, is another example of qualitative research. Data will be collected in the form of "words" rather than "numbers" and will include both the printed (advertising materials) and the electronic (website) forms. Evaluation of the data and comparison to the respective GCWBLP information will be made on a qualitative basis by applying a certain research approach, which will be presented later on.



Evaluation of marketing activities (advertising, direct mail etc) is primarily a quantitative activity as the data (telephone enquiries, office visits by potential candidates, admissions etc) will be exclusively in numeric form. The effectiveness of these activities will be measured by quantitative criteria but long-term benefits should be noted as well. (e.g. advertising campaign trying to build WBL programmes awareness or WBL programme presentation expected to deliver results in the future etc).

This form of evaluation raises different issues from those associated with “pure” research. I find myself in a situation where a worker researcher not only needs to understand/evaluate an activity (marketing efforts) but also needs to take an active role to improve the effectiveness of this activity. In theoretical terms, there is the fundamental issue as to whether the researcher should get involved in any changes at all or his responsibility stops with understanding what is going on and getting his conclusions to those concerned. However, it is part of my (work based) researcher’s job to use this understanding to suggest ways in which desirable change might take place and monitor the effectiveness of these attempts.

An alternative way (to qualitative/quantitative one) of thinking about the research strategy is to distinguish between deskwork and fieldwork. Deskwork is my literature review where the literature on strategy and marketing educational institutions is critically approached. The purpose of the literature review is not to get to know everything that has been said about the above topics but rather to become assured that appropriate action was taken and resulted in improving current practice or had a tangible outcome in terms of a useful product (e.g. set of guidelines). I will have to adopt a critical and highly selective perspective in reading and relating the work of others with objective to provide examples of successful higher education marketing efforts.

Deskwork research strategy is also involved in the research of marketing WBL studies in the UK. The NCWBLP’s feedback on strategic marketing for the WBL programmes will be critically evaluated with the intention to identify key differences and similarities between the British and the Greek markets that may lead to certain recommendations for the marketing activities in Greece.

The above two examples consist of research activities that can be done without fieldwork. However, in my case I will be going out “in the field” to collect research data. I will be applying fieldwork strategy to collect original data about the current profile of a potential WBL student, the satisfaction level of past WBL graduates from their studies and the perception of WBL studies by banking and insurance organisations with the objective to identify new companies for recruiting purposes.

It is now obvious that my research project will utilise all the available research families to draw valid conclusions. The key issue now is to identify the best blend of research approaches and tools to enable me to come up with reliable answers to my research questions.

#### 4.3.2 RESEARCH APPROACHES

A work based researcher faces many different research approaches that can be applied for a work based project, but the following are among the basic ones: action research, case study, experiments, survey, ethnography and soft systems. The research questions play a key role in selecting the most appropriate approach. It is acceptable to combine approaches but a dominant research approach should be adopted to provide guidelines on how the project will be undertaken and which research tools are to be used. I have considered the key characteristics of the above main research approaches and my selection was based on the criterion that I need to attempt changes and monitor the results. This criterion is fully satisfied by the action research approach.

Action research is going to be my dominant research approach whereby the researcher is involved in the situation by planning the action to be taken and monitoring the results, while survey is also to be used (in combination with action research in certain cases) to gather data from wide range of respondents.

According to R. Bennet and J. Oliver (1988) the process of action research involves the following: identifying the problem; suggesting proposals for action planning; selecting action steps; planning data collection; gathering data; drawing and communicating findings and conclusions. My research activity will go even further to identify and implement the change intended to improve the situation and evaluate/ determine the impact of change made on the original problem. It will be an action research that operates in cycles as per the model devised

by McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) and is shown below (Figure 5) in 6 steps. I will be going through this model a number of times during my research activity to improve a problem situation that will not actually be solved at the end of the research activity but further questions will be raised as a result of the action taken.

A typical case of the 6 steps action research model implementation is the development of literature (new brochure) on WBL studies, which was completed in August 2001 and was to be used during our press campaign that kicked off early September 2001. The step 1 (ask questions) refers to the question raised in June 2001: Is the current literature adequate for promoting the WBL programmes?

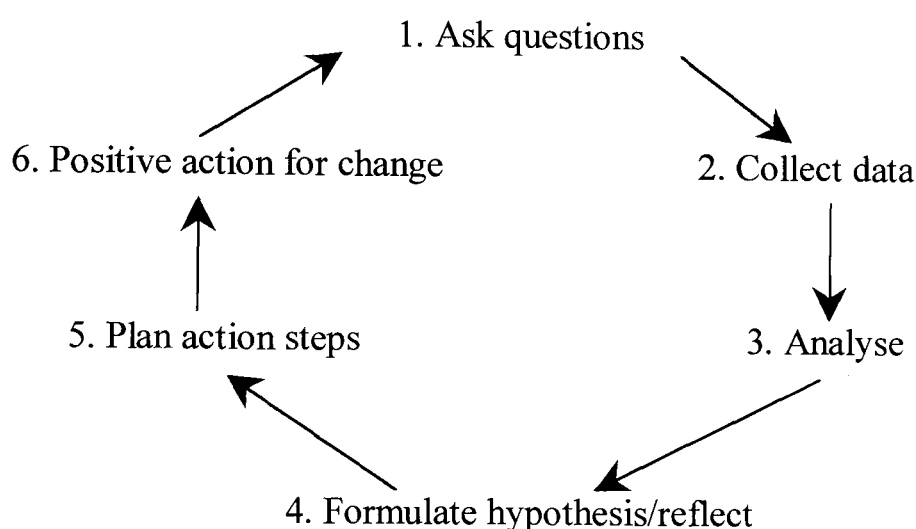


Figure 5 The action research cycle

Steps 2 and 3 have to do with collecting and analysing literature used by other institutions to promote postgraduate programmes. Step 4 is related to the design of a mock-up for the proposed new brochure. The last 2 steps involve the development and production of the new brochure as an action taken to improve the situation. However, the problem is not solved at this stage, as I need to evaluate the new brochure.

This evaluation will be conducted by comparing the key features of our brochure to those of other brochures used by higher education establishments that offer educational programmes for professionals. Advertising materials are extremely important as they help a potential student to receive the “first impression” of the university and its programmes. I will have therefore to determine the critical factors that play a significant role in establishing students’ perception about the programmes and the university. This perception is important for the final

selection to be made but other elements (e.g. course content) may play a more significant role. My brochure evaluation will strictly focus on the advertising material itself without taking into consideration other variables or needs of a prospective student.

I have determined the following (equally weighted) factors as very important in my effort to rate communication effectiveness of university's advertising material: presentation of the following academic variables: course content, course variety, class timetables, faculty standards, library facilities, class size, class timetable and programme recognition. Apart from the content related variables, other elements relevant to overall material presentation will be considered such as design and printing quality. All the above parameters will be rated by selecting one of the following levels: poor, moderate, good, very good and excellent. An overall score will be produced per institution, which will enable me to calculate the overall evaluation average. The brochure performance will be assessed against the overall average score.

Although the brochure is the most important communication tool, other enclosed materials (application form, fees etc) will be also assessed for a complete picture of the information pack to be drawn. The evaluation results will be the basis for proposals for further improvements to be made on the brochure and overall informative material, which are sent to potential students. Ideally, the revised brochure will be also evaluated by applying the above technique and its score will have been improved in comparison to its previous one. I will be going through the action research cycle again to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the advertising campaign in comparison to the results of the one we ran last year and the received feedback will be applied to propose improvements for the next campaign.
- Find out the current profiles of an individual WBL perspective student-clients and the outcome will provide directions for promoting the WBL programmes more effectively.
- Assess the level of satisfaction from all the WBL graduates and their recommendations will be a useful input towards improving the level of currently provided courses and eventually the future recruitment levels.

- Evaluate corporate perception of WBL programmes and the response will be applied to improve their marketability within corporations and to identify potential organisations as partners/clients for WBL programmes.

All the above tasks described in the five action research cycles are not to be finished when the project ends but should be continued at all times in order to keep improving practice in the future. Survey approach will be applied in combination with action research approach in the last three cases to gather information by asking the relevant group of people (i.e. perspective students-clients, graduates, training managers) a number of questions. Only survey approach will be applied to gather feedback from marketing WBL programmes overseas (United Kingdom, Cyprus and Hong Kong).

I have managed so far to present the suitable research families and to identify the appropriate research approaches to conduct my research. My key priority now is to select or develop the research techniques-tools that will help me collect the necessary data to answer the research questions.

#### 4.3.3 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

Generally speaking, data can be gathered by a variety of ways through a number of different sources such as reading, asking questions, observing or even a combination of the above. The previously identified research objectives and research approaches play a significant role in determining the research technique selection.

My higher education market review will use documents as the research technique to gather information on market size while my literature review will use the same tool to critically analyse opinions on marketing higher education. In both cases, I will relate the review conclusions to my research. The documents can be library based (paper, book and journal), organisationally based (NCWBLP's feedback on business development) or even electronically based through the Internet. The evaluation of the advertising material and comparison to those of the competitors will be also a documentary research with various kinds of documents (brochures, advertising insertions, website pages etc) to be collected for analysis.

However, for the above-mentioned action research-cum-survey activities another research technique will be determined to collect the necessary data. This technique will involve the combination of questionnaire with interview that are developed to suit the specific needs of every survey and are presented below.

## POTENTIAL WBL STUDENT PROFILE SURVEY

Based on last year's data, almost all the WBL students (approximately 95%) who were admitted to our programmes visited our office - responding to our campaign or being aware of WBL through other sources of information (e.g. ex-student, friend etc) - to receive further information and have a discussion-interview with me prior to taking their decision to apply. There is also a group of people I have met who did not wish to apply or did not qualify to do so. All the above groups of people are potential WBL students that can be used to provide the necessary data to establish a current prospective WBL student profile. In other words the research objective is to obtain a current profile of a potential individual WBL student to enable marketing of the WBL studies more effectively.

The research approach - as previously mentioned - is a survey as I intend to ask various people the same set of questions the answers of which will be to describe their profile. To be able to phrase the questions, I need first to identify the parameters (variables), which are necessary to define the profile of a potential WBL student. I initially listed a number of parameters but after brainstorming with the other members of the GCWBLP, I decided to use the following as being the most important ones: age group, education, number of years of professional experience, industry in which they had been working, recognition of WBL studies by the authorities and the source of information on WBL studies. My research survey will employ a one-page profile form as a tool to gather the relevant information during the conversation with the prospective students.

Education and years of professional experience are the most critical variables as they both characterise the potential student as eligible to be admitted to our programmes or not. For information purposes, admission criteria to a postgraduate level are the possession of a Bachelor's degree plus 5 years working experience or alternatively, qualification lower than Bachelor's degree plus 8 years of working experience. The entry criterion to undergraduate level is only 3 years of working experience.

The education variable may yield other useful information in conjunction with the industry in which the candidate works. For example, we may have a number of engineers who have graduated from a certain engineering school. Efforts should be made to target these graduates through their union or association (if of course such an association or union exist) to build awareness for the WBL studies that will result in higher student recruitment level.

The variable “WBL studies recognition” is very important and is linked to the industry in which the candidate is working. Currently, the state does not recognise any undergraduate and postgraduate titles awarded by foreign universities if the studies (or part of them) are conducted locally. State recognition is necessary if the award is to be used by a public sector employee working in public administration, education etc. However, certain semi-public organisations may start recognising the award. A potential student who works in this organisation and declares that recognition is no longer necessary, gives us a very good indication of his colleagues as another potential target group. The parameter “source of information” on the programmes will give valuable feedback on the advertising campaign recall rates. An increasing number of students recalling the advertisement from a specific newspaper or magazine is a confirmation of the effectiveness of the insertion in this medium.

The survey form concludes with a question on the candidate’s eligibility or the decision to apply or not should he/she be eligible to do so. This question enables collection of valuable information especially from the eligible students who do not wish to apply and the reasons (if they state them) for this decision.

The feedback from the above-presented survey will not be gathered from a sample, but from the whole population (visitors to GCWBLP during the 8-month period from September 2001 to April 2002 to enquire on the courses) and therefore no accuracy issue of representing the whole population is raised. The survey forms – a sample of which can be found in Appendix 1A - are self-administered and are completed after the presentation-interview with the potential student is over.

## WBL STUDIES GRADUATES’ FEEDBACK SURVEY

Almost one out of every four new students enrolled to the programmes during the period January 2000 to June 2001 was referred to WBL by others (“word of mouth”), mainly WBL

graduates. This is a clear indication of satisfaction by a remarkable percentage of our past graduates. It is therefore very important to establish and maintain a high level of graduates' satisfaction that will further generate more references. But what is the percentage of our satisfied graduates?

A research is to be conducted to gather data to evaluate the level of satisfaction from the WBL graduates and also to encourage them to express their views regarding further improvements they think we should consider implementing. It is my intention to design a one-page questionnaire-feedback form that enables our past graduates to state their thoughts within a very short period of time by selecting the appropriate answer and ticking the respective box. My first task is to identify the elements that influence the graduate's satisfaction from our course. The module feedback questionnaire currently used by the NCWBLP contributed significantly to the identification of the key elements and design of my questionnaire. I short listed the following as the key elements for my survey: course materials per different module, tutor support during the group sessions and personal advisor support for the final project, programme contribution to graduate's improvement of productivity and career advancement, graduate's initial expectations, graduate's willingness to recommend the course and finally graduate's recommendation on further improvements.

The graduate is asked to rate the level of course materials, tutor support, personal advisor support by selecting one of the following levels: poor, adequate, good and excellent. He is then asked to express his agreement or disagreement on whether his/her productivity increased or not through reinforcing existing knowledge and experience after the completion of the studies. In the next two questions, the graduate is asked to choose a positive or negative answer on two issues: first whether the degree helped in his/her career advancement or not and second whether the programme matched the initial expectations or not. The expectations match is strongly linked to the following question in which the respondent has the opportunity to express his/her preparedness to recommend the course or not by selecting one of the following options: very likely, likely, unlikely, very unlikely and undecided. The final question is aimed at receiving feedback on possible improvements the graduate deemed necessary if he/she - at the first place - believes that improvements need to be made. This question is open and sufficient space is allocated for other comments to be made should the respondent wishes to write an extended commentary.



The introductory part of the questionnaire invites the respondents to indicate their graduation year (1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001) and their area of expertise/industry they have been working. A sample of the questionnaire-feedback, which was mailed to all the students who graduated since GCWBLP was established, is presented at the Appendix 1B.

A cover letter accompanies the above questionnaire and explains the purpose of the survey, which was to ensure continuous pursuit of offering high quality WBL programmes. It is also explained that the responses are very much appreciated as they are to be the basis for any possible improvements to be made on the materials, supervision etc. The cover letter secures complete anonymity as the graduates are not required to write their names and there is no way respondents can be identified. However, it is mentioned that respondents who wish to sign the feedback form are free to do so. Anonymity is considered as absolute necessary for unbiased responses to be collected especially to the final questions on the necessity of course improvements.

Return date for the responses is specified on the letter (two weeks later) to ensure that the questionnaire will not be “forgotten”. To further reinforce high response rates self-addressed envelopes with stamps are enclosed. Finally, our brochure is also included as a way to keep the graduates up to date with the recently produced literature on the WBL programmes offered in Greece. We also request them to “spread the word around” about WBL, as the best promotion for any programme is the recommendation by someone who has already completed it.

## **WBLS’ CORPORATE PERCEPTION AND PENETRATION SURVEY**

Both the previously presented surveys are conducted to identify the profile of an individual WBL student and the satisfaction level of an individual graduate. However, a remarkable percentage of new students (mainly undergraduate level) has been admitted through the corporate route with their employer covering a significant percentage of their tuition fees. Efforts should therefore be made to establish partnerships with corporations through developing programmes that are fully customised to the specific company’s needs. This form of collaboration will not only produce significant recruitment results but will also capitalise on customisation, which has been the main selling point of WBL programmes. To build

recruitment from corporations, we have to market the WBL programmes effectively and to do so we need first to evaluate the perception of the programmes.

Identification of the WBL programmes' perception by various companies can only be established via research with survey to be the suitable research approach, as I need to ask a number of people the same set of questions. The major research tools to be used in the survey approach are the questionnaire and the interview.

## Questionnaire

I have first to exactly decide what I need to find out. My survey has to investigate companies' policies and profiles for personnel training and also the respondents' views on the benefits an employer can receive from the employee's participation in a work based learning programme. My first task is to establish the company's training profile and specify the key parameters-criteria a company has to consider before a final decision on training and education for the personnel is made. I listed a number of parameters that define the training profile and criteria for programmes' selection and after brainstorming with advisors and members of the GCWBLP team, I came up with the following: The profile can be established by the type of training and the area of training. The main selection criteria can be the company's needs, trainee's needs, course duration and course cost.

After completion of the preliminary work, I was ready to proceed with wording the possible questions to be asked. I came up with two questions where the respondent was asked to specify the type of training provided by his organisation by choosing either in-house or external and next to select the area of training by selecting one of the following: new products, sales/marketing, IT-software, IT-internet, other (if none of the above). The next question is related to criteria for programme selection and the choices are as mentioned above: company's needs, trainee's needs, course duration, course cost and others (if none of the above). The above questions enable us to establish the company's training needs profile and selection criteria. We can now proceed with introducing the work based learning programmes.

The respondent should be aware of the programmes (structure, characteristics etc) in order to be able to comment appropriately. There are two ways this can be achieved: Either by sending

our brochure to him/her before the survey is to be conducted or by making a presentation on the WBL programmes during the discussion. After we ensure that the respondent is fully aware of our programmes, questions can be raised.

To identify the most suitable questions, we need again to come up with the variables we want to test. My task is to specify the potential benefits for the organisation from the WBL programme completion by an employee. I went through UK brochures that present in detail the corporate benefits from work based learning studies and I ended up with the following three as the most important ones: creation of knowledge of direct value for the organisation, organisation's intellectual capital increase and employee's productivity increase through reinforcing existing knowledge and experience and acquiring new knowledge and new working methodology.

I can now move on to the next stage of questions wording. I prepared four questions in which the respondent is asked to express his/her opinion on the relationship between the WBL programmes and the above-mentioned elements by selecting one of the following possible answers: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The fourth question (with the same possible answers) is intended to get the respondents' feedback on whether he/she believed that WBL is an improvement to the currently offered programmes. Answers to the above four questions are to be reflected on the following one that asks the respondent the possibility of him/her recommending a WBL programme to his organisation with five possible answers: very likely, likely, undecided, unlikely and very unlikely. Positive (very likely, likely) or indecisive answers can be an encouraging feedback towards further discussions with the ultimate objective the establishment of a partnership.

I finally included in the beginning of the questionnaire general questions to specify the date, company's name, manager's name and designation and number of company's employees and at the end a question on whether a possible contact in the future is desirable. The questionnaire is ready and its final version is appended at the end (Appendix 1C). My intention was to design an easily understood questionnaire and finally my questions were basically list type (one item is selected from a list) and category type (only one set of categories is selected) out of the seven structured question types Youngman (1986) has listed.

Sampling, the selection of sufficient numbers of people to target in the population of interest, is of paramount importance for my survey, as I have to ensure that meaningful conclusions on WBL corporate perception can be drawn. I have to face two types of sampling: First, which specific industries to focus and second which companies/managers within the specified industries to approach. After careful consideration, the decision was taken for my research to focus on two industries, insurance and banking for the following reasons: The highest percentage of new students registered for WBL programmes in the history of GCWBLP comes from the insurance industry, while banking is the largest service industry in Greece in terms of personnel (more than 60,000 employees according to the Greek Financial Directory, ICAP 2000) with extremely high recruitment potential. The research sample (number of insurance and banking corporations) will be large enough to represent the whole population satisfactorily and to provide a clear answer to the research questions. An indication of the research sample size comes from the following percentages: 85% of bank employees work for the 10 largest banks, while 70% of insurance agents work for the 8 largest insurance companies (Greek Financial Directory, ICAP 2000). In other words, my research task to be accomplished was to approach the training managers (or other senior manager with responsibilities on training) from the largest banks and insurance companies. As my research sample is not very big, I will try to arrange face-to-face meetings with the potential respondents for their feedback to be received.

I decided first to introduce our WBL programmes by sending personalised letters to a number of senior (training or human resources) managers within the identified industries with our brochure enclosed. This activity is expected to increase WBL awareness, as it is believed that despite the press campaign a significantly large population of professionals may have never heard of the work based learning concept before. My next task is to follow up and meet them for a discussion after which the above-presented questionnaire can be completed. During this conversation-interview the WBL programmes can be further presented and the potential for recruitment on corporate basis will be further evaluated. I have to plan my interview carefully to maximise the returns.

## Interview

The selection of the most appropriate interview method is very crucial in getting the best possible results. My aim is to obtain not only answers to the same questions from a number of

professionals, but also to provide them with the opportunity to express themselves about issues which are significant and relevant to the research topics. In other words, my interview type is neither structured (only specific questions leading to specific answers) nor unstructured (open-ended general discussion) type but something in between: semi-structured. This type of interview provides great flexibility for the work based researcher as the conversation takes the form of a guided interview with specific questions but at the same time the respondents can give their points of view in their own time. My approach is to fill up the above-developed questionnaire after the discussion-interview is over. The completion of a number of questionnaires can produce easily comparable results.

Interviews can be time consuming activities and often some professionals use this as a reason to avoid it. For my research activity, every effort will be made to arrange face-to-face interviews but in certain cases telephone interviews will be acceptable should the respondent requests to be approached in this way instead. The results from telephone and face-to-face interviews are not usually fully comparable. However, I will apply a focused approach in both interview types with the responses to be recorded in the above-presented questionnaire for both cases and obviously the feedback from the questionnaires should be fully comparable.

The focusing on only two industries is due to time constraint of my research activity. Other industries will be identified and approached in the future with further details to be provided in my three-year plan report. On top of the banking and insurance industries, my intention is also to visit the three corporations that have previously sponsored professionals for a WBL programme and get a feedback on the level of satisfaction from the training managers. The discussion - with the ultimate objective of enhancing corporate recruitment - will take the form of a semi-structured interview during which the above-mentioned questionnaire-checklist (Appendix 1C) can also be used to produce comparable results.

## **SURVEY ON MARKETING WBL OVERSEAS**

Middlesex University in its effort to take WBL Studies worldwide has so far managed to successfully penetrate Greece, Cyprus and Hong Kong. The University employs a local agent in Cyprus who liaises with the National Centre in the promotion and implementation of work based learning. Academics from the National Centre provide the support to various organisations and individuals during their regular visits. This operational model (branch

office) has been established for almost the same period as the Greek Centre and the same model was originally chosen for entry into the Hong Kong market (early 2000). Remarkable success in marketing WBL programmes has been achieved in both countries and it is therefore necessary to obtain the relevant feedback. The Director of the NCWBLP is able to provide this feedback as he is fully aware of the marketing strategy and results in the above-mentioned countries. However, the most valuable feedback in marketing WBL overseas can be obtained from the award-winning National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships, which has provided over 50 organisations in the public and private sectors with study programmes since 1993. Its extensive experience in building the awareness and successfully promoting the WBLS is of paramount importance for my study.

It is understood (after a conversation with the Centre's Head of Business Development) that there is no advertising budget and therefore there is no advertising activity but only editorials in selected publications are used to build awareness. It appears that the main means for student recruitment in the UK is presentations to various organisations by a selected number of academic staff members.

Research will have to be conducted to collect and evaluate the feedback on the corporate presentations about WBL studies in the UK. I intend to use a one-page questionnaire-feedback form to enable the academic team who has made the presentations to express themselves within a short period of time by ticking the box of the most suitable answer. The first priority is to identify the key parameters related to the corporate presentations that need to be researched. I have come up with the following key elements for my survey: number of corporations to which presentations were made and their profile, number and designation of people attending the presentations, mode of presentations, and actual / expected number of students recruited / to be recruited.

The respondent is firstly asked to indicate the number of corporations to which presentations he / she has made during the last 12 months. I am interested in the number of corporations and not in the number of presentations as we may have the case of a corporation to which more than one presentation was made. The corporate profile is then specified as the breakdown per sector (public, private) and industry (education, finance, construction, marketing, other industry). This question will - to a large extent - define the target group for potential student

recruitment. I intend to identify the decision-makers who are initially approached with the next two questions that refer to the total number of presentations. I only want to get the general “feeling” (i.e. what is usually the case for the presentations already made and not for each separate presentation). The respondent should select one answer to specify the number of people (less than three, three to five, more than five) usually attending the presentations and their designation (managing directors, training managers, HR managers, other designation).

I have next included two questions of which the responses will provide a clear indication of the results from the above presentations expressed in actual number of corporations students were recruited from and the actual student recruitment number. As it is understood that it does take time for a corporation to decide about potential participation to the programmes, I have included the next two questions that give the respondent the chance to express his/her personal thoughts about the number of corporations that may participate as well in the future and the average time a corporation takes to reach its final decision. The latter will be answered as a selection of one of the following options: less than a month, one to three months and more than three months. In this way, we will have a complete “picture” of the success of the presentations, as it is likely that recently made presentations have not produced any recruitment results yet.

We have so far established the profile of targeted corporations and the actual and potential success rate of the presentations. The following question intends to give general information about the way the corporations are identified for presentations and the respondent should select one of three potential ways (direct mail, past student contacts, personal (NC) contacts) or specify other ways.

As I am not aware of the names of the academic staff that usually make presentations, I have included the next question which requests from the respondent to specify the name / names and e-mail address / addresses of colleagues that contact presentations as well and can contribute to my survey. In this way, I will be able to fully cover and receive feedback from the whole population of academic staff who have made corporate presentations thus avoiding any sample representation issues. A sample of the questionnaire-feedback, which was e-mailed to all the respondents, is presented at the Appendix 1D. The above questionnaire is attached to a cover letter that introduces my doctorate project objective, the survey and

myself. A follow up interview is likely to be necessary with the respondents to clarify points of view and provide feedback of general interest that it could not be included in the questionnaire.

It is believed that once the data are gathered, the impact of the corporate presentations on student recruitment in the UK can be fully evaluated. Consequently, the number of students that have been recruited with other means except the presentations will be established, through a conversation-interview with the NCWBLP Director. During this interview, feedback from marketing WBL in Cyprus and Hong Kong will be gathered as well with emphasis on marketing strategy and its impact on student recruitment levels. Analysis and evaluation of all the above information will enable me to meet the research objective of seeking and evaluating feedback on promoting the work based learning studies in the UK, Cyprus and Hong Kong.

#### 4.4 RESEARCH ISSUES

The above identified research approaches and techniques have been selected to deliver the best possible results in order to achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions. However, there is a number of other issues a work based researcher should consider as well that have to do with the reliability, validity, accessibility to the data, ethical considerations and feasibility of the study. The sections below attempt to address these issues.

##### 4.4.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The selected research tools for data collection should always be examined critically to assess to what extent it is likely to be reliable and valid. According to Bell (1995) reliability is the extent to which a test (in my case research technique) produces similar (consistent) results under constant conditions on all occasions. A question that may produce one type of answer from one respondent and another type from another respondent is unreliable. The research questions as phrased in my questionnaires (Appendices 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D) do not ask opinions that might produce two different types of answers but have been designed (list, category types) to yield consistent, reliable ones as the respondent has a selection of possible answers to choose from for all the questions.



Validity is associated with an item measuring or describing what it is supposed to measure or describe (Bell, 1995). For research purposes, it has to do with asking the appropriate research questions to obtain information that will lead to logical conclusions and recommendations. An unreliable research question should also lack validity, but a reliable one is not necessarily also valid. It is quite difficult to measure the extent of the validity for one question, but it is also very rare case this measurement to be necessary.

A common method to test the reliability and validity of research techniques is to pilot this tool among colleagues or other researchers. My four questionnaires have been tested with other GCWBLP advisors in terms of their reliability and validity. I explained to them my research objective for every survey and asked them whether they could have received different responses by applying my questionnaire or not. Their feedback was very constructive for me and I had to make a number of changes in the wording of questions to improve the levels of reliability and validity of my research instruments.

#### 4.4.2 ACCESSIBILITY AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Accessibility to the data necessary for the research is extremely important for the success of this research. Researchers may experience difficulties in gathering data from institutions, libraries, public organisations etc. My research activity does not require collection of data that are not easily available and special permission has to be sought. Data related to the advertising material, courses offered and tuition fees by competitors can be easily accessed. It has to be noted here that data related to the number of students an institution has or its advertising budget are confidential and it is unlikely to be easily accessed but an accurate estimate can be made by considering other sources (graduation announcement, advertising journals etc).

There is no accessibility problem associated with the respondents of the four surveys. The respondents in the “profile” survey do visit our premises for information and the respondents in the “satisfaction” survey are past graduates who will be approached by mail. The “corporate perception” survey may give rise to accessibility problems, as the respondents are senior managers with limited time available for discussions and interviews. Provision has been made to allow telephone interview to be used to collect reliable data should the respondents prove to be inaccessible.

My work based study may need to address ethical issues, although it is anticipated that these issues will be minor as there will be no conflict of interests. The research context (higher education marketing) has no special ethical codes to understand that may influence my research area. The research tools have taken into consideration the concept of anonymity, as the graduates' feedback survey forms are anonymous. However, the respondents –as explained in the cover letter- may sign the forms if they wish to do so. No issues of confidentiality will be raised, as no question to be asked (see Appendices 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D) refers to confidential or other “sensitive” data.

#### 4.4.3 FEASIBILITY

There are five key parameters that need to be considered to evaluate the feasibility of the proposed study: timescale, resources, access to information, support available and existing knowledge/expertise in the area to be investigated.

I have allocated 19 months for my research study with the research activity to cover a period of about 8 months for the “profile” and “corporate perception” surveys. The above period is more than sufficient for conducting the surveys and adequate length of time has been allocated for the other activities (literature review, evaluation of advertising etc). My research does not require special resources in terms of human or monetary capital. I will be able to undertake the study myself while the cost for various activities (advertising, direct mail, mail of questionnaires) is part of the annual advertising and promotion budget of the GCWBLP. No special statistical package is required to analyse the questionnaire responses, as the research sample is not expected to be very large.

Accessibility and other relevant issues have already been previously addressed, while the support from my employer is given taking into consideration that the research results will be beneficial for the University-Employer through potential financial gains for the University due to improved recruitment rates. On top of that, I can count on the support and expertise of the GCWBLP Academic Director on the questionnaires' results analysis and on the development of the proposed long-term strategy.

I had the opportunity to demonstrate my developed knowledge of research methodology and expertise in the area of strategic development and marketing in the previous assignments of

my doctoral programme. After the satisfaction of all the above feasibility parameters. I believe that my doctoral research project is absolutely feasible.

In summary, my large scale and high level doctoral project will be conducted by applying a range of research families (fieldwork and deskwork, qualitative and quantitative), approaches (action research and survey) and techniques (documents, interviews and questionnaires) to deal effectively with the complexity of my work based research and provide answers to my research questions.

The following chapter presents the research findings from the above analysed research activities and goes through the actions that have been taken in our efforts to implement the strategic choice i.e. to further penetrate and develop new markets for the existing programmes. The research findings and the feedback from the actions taken will vastly contribute towards achieving our key objective: the increment of the student recruitment rates. We need to note at this point that this is/will be our main objective while others such as keeping high quality of academic programmes, providing excellent student service etc are/will be also well supported.

# 5

## THE WBL-RELATED RESEARCH RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the surveys related to the WBL concept undertaken to identify and evaluate the current potential student profile, the satisfaction of past graduates from their studies, the perception of WBL programmes by various insurance companies, banking organisations and corporations which currently sponsor WBL studies and finally the NCWBLP approach to market the programmes in the United Kingdom. The concluding part discusses the marketing issues raised by the research activity, evaluates the preparedness of the Greek market to perceive WBL the way it has been established in the UK and identifies the general approach to be implemented by the GCWBLP in the future.

### 5.1 POTENTIAL INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROFILE

This survey intended to establish a current potential individual WBL student profile to enable us to identify new target groups and market the programmes more effectively. The research was conducted at the GCWBLP office from September 2001 to April 2002 and the participants were all the potential students who visited GCWBLP office to enquire about WBL programmes during that period. For every individual the form presented at Appendix 1A was completed by me after the presentation-interview.

A total number of 112 respondents participated in this survey. The majority of them (78 people or 70%) became aware of the programmes through one of the advertisements and the rest (34 people or 30%) were introduced to us by a past graduate, a friend or other sources. It should be noted that the press advertising campaign covered a period of two months (end

August 2001 to end October 2001) but generated enquiries over an extended period of about six months (September 2001 to February 2002). All the respondents received the brochure before the interview for a first introduction to the programmes and the interview enabled them to resolve any queries and take the final decision on whether to apply for a WBL course or not. The interview allowed us to assess the eligibility of a potential student for entry to the programmes.

The following profile characteristics of the population were gathered: sex, age group, education level, number of years of experience and industry they have been working. The potential students also provided their views about the importance of the WBL studies recognition (by the Greek Government official body-Dikatsa) and the source of information about the programmes. The closing question referred to the final decision about applying for our courses and it was not completed the day of the interview but only after the respondent took his/her final decision.

It was noted during the research activity that for a number of questions from the originally designed feedback form (Appendix 1A) more possible answers should have been made available to the respondents. A number of modifications had to be introduced to improve the accuracy of the data that were collected. First improvement had to do with the question related to the education level. Apart from the three possible answers (Bachelor's, Technical education equivalent to undergraduate level and other) the option "uncompleted" was introduced as it was found out that a large number of respondents had left their studies uncompleted. The second improvement was associated with the industry the potential student was working. The term "social sciences" was removed and the following four new terms were introduced: "psychology", "arts & design", "information technology" and "public administration". It was noticed that only psychologists participated in our survey from the social sciences field and therefore the original term "social sciences" had to be replaced by the term "psychology" to better describe the participants' industry. It was also noted that a remarkable percentage (25%) of the potential students was working in the areas of arts & design (5%), information technology (15%) and public administration (5%). In order to have a representation of all the working fields with at least 4% participation in our sample, the above three terms were also introduced and obviously the general term "other industries" no longer covers arts & design, IT and public administration, as it was the case in the original design of

the survey form. Before proceeding with the results presentation, we ought to clarify that we should not relate the actual number of students enrolled to the programmes from September 2001 to April 2002 to the number of the survey participants who were admitted to the programmes during the same period, due to following reasons:

- A small number of actual students who commenced their studies after September 2001 were interviewed before this month or were not interviewed at all (they mailed their applications which subsequently were approved) and therefore did not participate in our study.
- A number of survey participants have not commenced their studies - as of April 2002 - although they applied and were accepted to the programmes (we define “actual student” as the one who actually commences his/her studies and not the one whose application has been accepted).
- A number of survey participants did not meet the admissions requirements and their applications were not approved.

After this clarification, we can move on to present the findings by analysing the population demographics. The majority of the potential work based learning students were men as 82 (73%) out of the 112 people who expressed interest in the courses were males and only 30 (27%) females. The age group breakdown revealed that the four identified age groups were represented in our survey with percentages that were close to its other. The 31 to 35 years of age group represented the highest percentage of the respondents (34 people – 30%), followed by the group 36-40 (28 respondents - 25%), the 26-30 group (26 respondents – 23%) and the group above 40 years of age with 24 participants (22%). Table no. 1 presents the breakdown of the respondents by sex and age group.

	26 – 30	31 - 35	36 - 40	40+	TOTAL
Females	8	7	8	7	30
Males	18	27	20	17	82
TOTAL	26	34	28	24	112

Table 1 Sex distribution by age group

There are three different ways to estimate the average age of the potential students: The arithmetic mean, the median and the mode. The arithmetic mean seemed to be the most suitable way in comparison to the other two, as the median - allows to find the middle value -

is useful where there are extreme values and the mode relates to the most frequently occurring value. The arithmetic mean is obtained by adding together each item (value) and dividing by the total number of values. The table below explains how the arithmetic mean was applied to calculate the arithmetic mean for the potential student's age.

The age range 26 – 30 included those who participated in our survey on and after their twenty-sixth birthday and those who responded before their thirtieth birthday. This range covers almost 5 years and so the most accurate mid-point is 28. The same principle applied to the next two ranges. For the last range, the participants could be any age from 40 upwards, but the mid-point 40 was chosen as the majority (18) of them were 40 to 43 years of age.

AGE	FREQUENCY	MID-POINT	FREQUENCY X MID-POINT
26 – 30	26	28	728
31 – 35	34	33	1122
36 – 40	28	38	1064
40+	24	40	960
TOTAL	112		3874

Table 2 Arithmetic mean calculation for the potential students' age

The frequencies from every age group were multiplied by the relevant mid-point and the outcomes were added to the total number of 3874. This number was then divided by the number 112 and the result (34.6) was the arithmetic mean. It should be noted that if we were to apply the above method only to the female population (30 persons) or only to the male one (82 persons) the arithmetic mean would also be 34.6 for both cases.

The education level analysis of our participants (Figure 6) indicated that 46 (or 41%) of them hold undergraduate degree either Bachelor's (40 persons – 36%) from a four-year university course or Diploma (6 persons – 5%) from a three-year technological institute (TEI) course. The big majority of our potential students (53 persons – 47%) declared certified training (seminars or other short courses) as the only education they have received, while a small percentage (12% or 13 respondents) has never completed their undergraduate studies. All the above data is presented in the following pie chart (Figure 6).

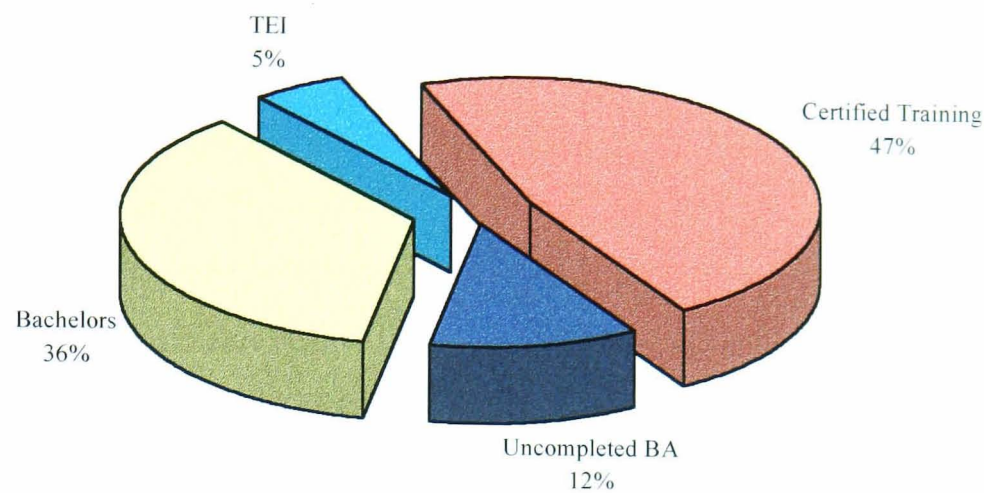


Figure 6 Distribution of potential students' educational level

The analysis of the years of working experience for the candidate students indicated that the majority of them had rather extensive employment history with 45 persons (40%) to have more than 12 years experience and another 24 persons (21%) to have from 9 to 11 years experience. In other words, 3 out of 5 potential students have been working in the same field for more than 9 years.

The initially developed feedback form included four different ranges for the years of experience: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 and 12+. If we try to apply the above-mentioned principle of arithmetic mean to the "years of experience" variable with mid-point 12 for the last range (12+) the results will not be that reliable as 40% of our participants were represented in this range.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	FREQUENCY	MID-POINT	FREQUENCY X MID-POINT
3 – 5	23	4	92
6 – 8	20	7	140
9 – 11	24	10	240
12 – 14	17	13	221
15 – 17	13	16	208
18+	15	18	270
TOTAL	112		1171

Table 3 Arithmetic mean calculation for the potential students' years of experience



We went through the primary data (feedback forms) again and managed to find out more accurate information for the years of experience for those who belong in this category. The final outcome (presented in the Table 3) was to introduce three new ranges (12-14, 15-17 and 18+) to better reflect the years of experience distribution.

The arithmetic mean was 10.5, which was the outcome of the division of the number 1171 by 112. It appeared that the average potential student had long enough (10.5 years) experience to be considered for a Master's degree, regardless of his/her educational level. This was because according to the admissions criteria a potential student without a Bachelor's degree but with at least 8 years of managerial experience within the same field is eligible to apply for a Master's degree.

If we take a close look at the relationship between education level and years of experience, we will find out that only a very small percentage of the prospective students were potential BA students. Table 3 indicates that only 43 participants had 8 or less years of experience with 7 of them to have exactly 8 years according to the primary data. In other words, we had 36 respondents with 7 or fewer years of experience but 21 of them had previously acquired an undergraduate title. We ended up with 15 persons who could be considered for BA, but only 9 were eligible as 6 of them had less than three years of experience. The bottom line was that the potential BA students were only 9 (8%) from the whole population of the 112 respondents. This was a valuable feedback to the marketing of the programmes, as it was understood that marketing and promotional efforts should focus on targeting primarily students for postgraduate studies.

The total number of the respondents were working in 18 different fields with sales & marketing (S&M) and information technology (IT) to be the most common ones with 17 (15%) respondents from each of these two areas. Finance (Fin) is the field in which 13% of our participants were engaged professionally with the banking sector (Bnk) employees and psychologists (Psy) to be also highly represented in the population with 11 persons (10%) from each of these two areas. The percentage distribution of the working fields of the population was compared to this of the graduates for the years 1998 – 2001 and the results are presented in the Figure 7.

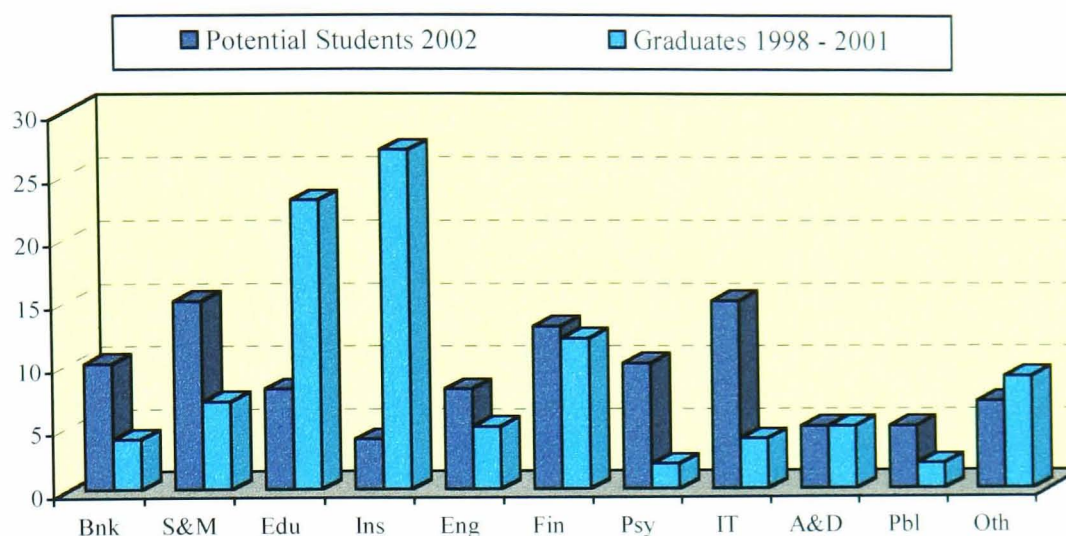


Figure 7 Percentage distribution of potential students and past graduates according to their working field

A remarkable percentage of 50% of the graduates have come from the insurance (27%) and education (23%) areas. All the graduates from the insurance area joined as a group after successful presentations of the WBL studies. Currently, only 4% of our respondents were insurance consultants and the feedback we therefore received was that this industry could only be approached on a corporate basis (i.e. through presentations to training managers of insurance companies). The same applied - to a lesser extent - for the education field: about half of the educator graduates (or 11% of the total graduates) had joined as individuals and the other half as a group following successful presentations. Currently, the percentage of educators who enquired about the programmes on an individual basis was only 8% (of the total number of enquirers).

The areas with the substantially higher percentage representation in the current potential student distribution comparing to this of the graduates were: banking, psychology, information technology and sales & marketing. The most impressive percentage increases were those of the psychology (from 2% of the grads to 10% of the current potential students), IT (from 4% to 15%) and banking sector (from 4% to 10%). In other words, it is very likely that an increasing proportion of the students to come from these three areas and we should take this into consideration when it comes to planning the future marketing activities. The remaining professional fields (Engineering - Eng, Finance - Fin, Arts & Design – A&D, and Public Administration - Pbl) indicated no significant percentage increment and no particular conclusions for the marketing efforts could be drawn.

As mentioned before (Part 3.2.2 – S.W.O.T. Analysis), the Greek Government official body (Dikatsa) does not recognise any academic qualifications obtained from foreign Universities through courses conducted in Greece as – according to the Constitution - only locally based Universities are permitted to provide higher education services. This official recognition is necessary for all awards obtained by people currently working (or seeking employment) in the public sector. Our respondents commented on the importance of this recognition in relation to their decision to apply for a WBL course and the results came up to be very straightforward: 84 out of 112 respondents (75%) commented that the non-recognition was not important to them at all. However, the percentages of them considering the recognition as important (21%) or as very important (4%) were significant and definitely had an obvious impact on our recruitment rates. None of the 4 participants who considered the recognition very important and only 4 out of the 24 who believed that the recognition was important finally applied for a WBL course. In other words, only 1 out of 7 candidates who regarded the recognition at least important submitted an application for our programmes.

We need to clarify at this point two issues. First, a significant number of persons from those who regarded recognition as not important did not finally apply, as other elements (which will be later on analysed) were taken into consideration. In fact, only 5 out of 12 did apply. The second issue was that people – generally speaking - indicated their concerns about the recognition prior to the presentation-interview and it was most likely that they would have not arranged for a meeting at our office if they viewed recognition as important. Persons who proceeded to the stage of presentation (i.e. the participants of our survey) were overall not concerned about the recognition and this was the reason for the high percentage representation (75%). This means that the population participated in our survey was not an equal representation of the two alternatives (recognition important or not important).

The press advertisements (we ran from end August to end October 2001) was by far the primary source of information on our studies for our survey participants (70%). Other sources included the WBL student (13%) and WBL advisor (13%). The most effective source (i.e. converting a potential student to an actual one) was the WBL advisor as 10 out of 12 respondents who got to be informed about WBL studies by an advisor did actually join our programmes. The relevant rates for the press and WBL students as sources of information were 41% (32 out of 78 participants) and 31% (5 out of 16 participants) respectively.

It was very useful for our marketing efforts to analyse the responses of those who did not wish to apply for our programmes. First of all, we should mention that 53 participants (out of the 112) were accepted to our programmes with 49 of them at the postgraduate level. Out of the remaining 59 participants 6 were not eligible to apply due to their limited working experience. We left with 53 persons who did not apply (or have not applied yet). Let's go through the reasons they stated for their decision. The first reason seemed to be timing as 32% (17 out of the 53 eligible to apply) responded that "they need time to decide / they may join in the future". It is believed that this reason might be a "diplomatic way out" for their attitude towards the WBL concept, as experience has shown that a very large percentage (more than 90%) of our current students applied for the programme soon after the interview (i.e. within a few weeks). A more accurate evaluation of the above-mentioned percentage (32%) will be obtained in the coming September when the vast majority of our students commence their studies. It is highly anticipated that those who will not apply for the programmes commencing September 2002 will never apply in the future.

A similar percentage to the above (32% or 17 participants) clearly indicated that they did not wish to proceed due to lack of recognition of the WBL award by Dikatsa. We tried to identify a relation between the above reason and the working field and the result clearly showed that 9 out of the above 17 people were working in either the education (6 persons) or the psychology (3 persons) areas and the remaining 8 in 6 different areas. This feedback was – to a large extent - anticipated as the education area is public-run and participants were not willing to join programmes that were not to contribute to their career progress and promotion. The concerns of the psychologists were related to their professional rights as lack of public recognition results in major difficulties in obtaining professional licences that allow psychologists to practice their profession. The relationship psychologists – professional rights needs further exploration from marketing point of view, as the possibility of psychologists to be awarded professional rights after the completion of WBL studies is a strong "selling point" for our programmes.

A remarkable percentage (27% or 14 respondents) cited "lack of theoretical knowledge provision" as the reason for not wishing to apply for a WBL programme. Their main need to undertake a postgraduate programme was to accumulate additional subject-based knowledge in a specific area of their preference and the point that WBL studies did not satisfy this need

automatically led them to consider other alternative programmes. It was communicated to them that work based learning as a field of study also involves knowledge creation through undertaking work based projects that must produce both theoretical and practical knowledge and through enhancement of project management and methodological skills but most of them responded that their intention was to acquire theoretical knowledge not strictly related to their working fields. This was quite common from people in sales/marketing or finance who wanted to pursue a Master's in Business Administration and acquire theoretical knowledge in Project Management, Human Resources Management, Business Policy, E-commerce etc. WBL in principle does not exclude theoretical knowledge, but there is no provision for theoretical knowledge acquisition the way the programmes are currently offered in Greece. A possible "answer" from the GCWBLP to this issue could be the design of tailor made programmes with additional element the knowledge (in the form of seminars) provided. This is feasible for specific fields (e.g. finance) but only if a minimum number of students are interested in this potential programme.

Finally, we should take into consideration the response of 5 respondents (10%) who claimed that "perception of WBL studies" was the reason for not pursuing a WBL award. Although the actual number (5) was not large enough to enable reliable conclusions to be drawn, they all agreed that "a WBL award might not be perceived by a potential future interviewer as well as a taught award due to its nature" (i.e. accreditation of work based learning without theoretical knowledge provision). The interests of this group of people were different from those of the previous group in the sense that they were not keen in accumulating further theoretical knowledge. However, the fact that no such knowledge can be acquired through the WBL studies (under their current programme structure in Greece) created certain degree of scepticism about the perception of this unique educational philosophy. From GCWBLP's point of view, there is not answer to address this issue, but it is understood that WBL studies' perception will be highly improved should the state recognition issue is resolved. A thorough survey of the WBL studies perception on corporate basis is provided below (5.3).

Having presented the survey results, we are able to provide a short description of a typical individual WBL student. A potential WBL student is likely to be a man, 35 years of age, with undergraduate studies completed and about 10 years working experience. He is likely to be working in one of the following fields: IT, sales/marketing, finance, psychology and banking.

The lack of public recognition of the WBL studies is not considered overall important but one out of three eligible potential WBL students do not finally apply due to the lack of recognition and knowledge provision and the WBL perception in relation to the taught courses.

The above-presented potential WBL student profile survey included data collected until April 2002. However, the research activity will be an on-going one to provide continuously updated directions for more effective promotion of our programmes. In fact, our research approach is an action research that operates in cycles as per the model devised by McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) and presented previously in the research approaches segment (4.3.2). We have so far gone through the first 4 stages of the action research cycle (ask questions – collect data – analyse – formulate hypothesis/reflect). The final two phases (plan action steps – positive action for change) have to do with the action to be taken which, according to our survey findings, includes the following:

- Explore the possibility of marketing the programmes to professionals (such as psychologists) seeking recognition of their professional rights in Greece.
- Identify ways to approach candidates from banking and IT industries.
- Approach the insurance companies through presentations to the training managers as it was found out that insurance agents are unlikely to enquire about our programmes on an individual basis.
- Enquire into the possible recognition of the WBL by the Greek authorities.

The above action steps are the positive action for change, which constitutes the last stage of the action research cycle. The feedback from these actions will – most likely – generate new questions that will lead to a new action research cycle commencing with asking research questions and collecting and analysing data. The extension of the research activity after April 2002 was to enable us to collect new data and go through the six-stage action research cycle once more. At the end of the day, going through the action research cycle and taking positive action for change a number of times will substantially advance the success of our future marketing efforts.



## 5.2 PAST GRADUATES' SATISFACTION

The intention of this survey was to evaluate the level of satisfaction from materials and supervision of all the graduates who have completed their studies since the GCWBLP was established in 1997. Undoubtedly, the most important outcome of the survey was the graduates' recommendations for potential improvements of materials, supervision etc related to the currently delivered programmes. Generally speaking, quality improvement of the existing programmes is expected to further enhance the rate of students who will join our courses due to an increasing number of recommendations by graduates (almost one out of three new students who joined our programmes during the academic years 2000-01 and 2001-02 was recommended by graduates, advisors etc or overall "word of mouth"). The research was conducted in early November 2001 by mailing the questionnaire-feedback form (Appendix 1B) to all the WBL graduates. As previously mentioned (Research techniques, 4.3.3), a cover letter explained the survey's objective and requested the graduates' participation to enable us to improve the quality of the delivered courses. Out of the 182 graduates, only 174 received our material due to the change of address for the remaining 8 graduates for which we were not aware.

A total number of 56 graduates (32 %) completed and mailed back the questionnaire in the self-addressed stamped envelope we had enclosed. This response rate was not considered high enough, but no follow up letters could have been sent out as we promised anonymity and there was no way to find out who replied and who did not do so.

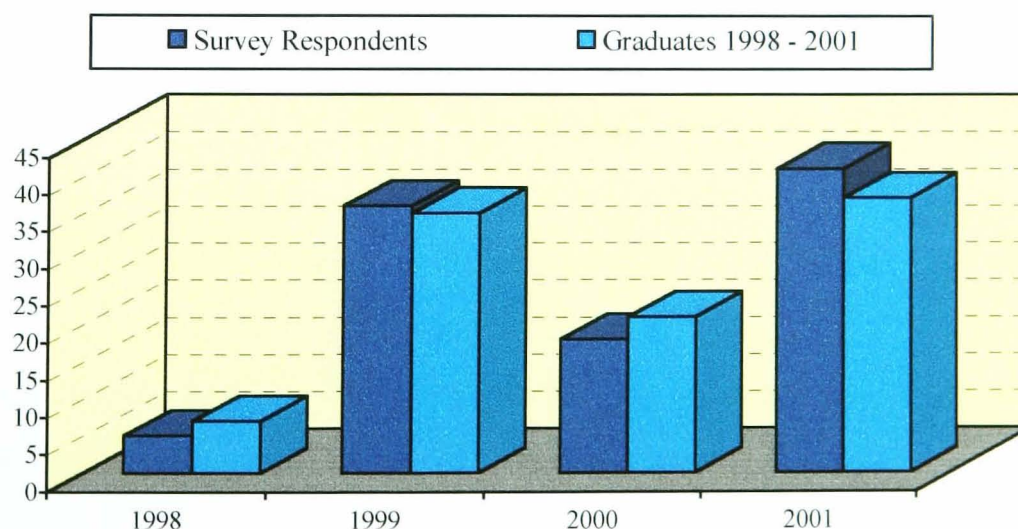


Figure 8 Percentage distribution of survey respondents and past graduates per graduation year

It is known that people who returned questionnaires differ from those who didn't and therefore a high non-response rate may distort the results. However, we applied a criterion that could more or less testify on the reliability of the findings.

This criterion was the representation of the total number of graduates per year and per subject in the specific group of respondents. Our task was to evaluate whether the distribution of the survey participants per year adequately represented the graduates population per year. The results are shown in the Figure 8. A quick look at the Figure 8 tells us that the group of respondents was a very good representation of the graduates' population per year as: 7% of our graduates graduated in 1998 while 5% of our respondents graduated the same year. Going through the other three years the percentages were: 35% of graduates and 36% of respondents from 1999, 21% of graduates and 18% of respondents from 2000 and 37% of graduates and 41% of respondents from 2001. In other words, the criterion of the graduates' representation per year has been very satisfactorily met in the respondents' population.

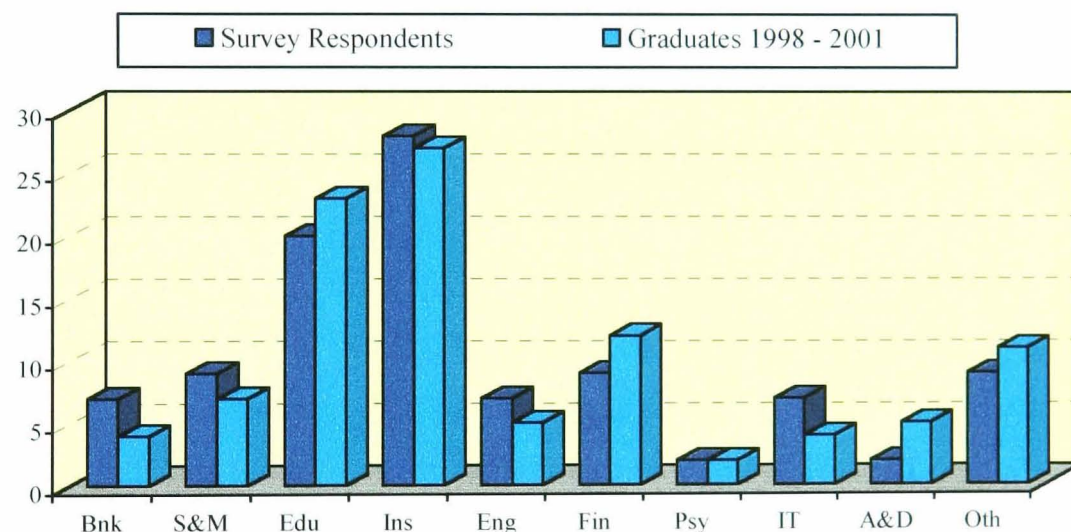


Figure 9 Percentage distribution of survey respondents and past graduates per subject

Let's proceed with evaluation of the second criterion: representation of graduates per subject. The respondents and the graduates groups were broken down by the following various subjects-working fields: banking, sales and marketing, education, insurance, engineering, finance, psychology, information technology, arts & design and others.

The comparison of the percentage distribution is presented above as Figure 9. It was obvious that the subject distribution in the graduates' population was very similar to this in the



respondents' population. Analytically, banking was the subject of 7% of our respondents and of 4% of the graduates, sales and marketing was the working field for 9% of the respondents and 7% of the graduates. The representation percentages for the other subjects were as follows (in brackets is the percentage of graduates): education 20% (23%), insurance 28% (27%), engineering 7% (5%), finance 9% (12%), psychology 2% (2%), information technology 7% (4%), arts & design 2% (5%) and others 9% (11%). Our survey respondents ideally represented the graduates' population per subject with maximum percentage discrepancies only 3% (banking, education, finance, information technology and arts & design).

Taking into consideration the above representation conclusions, we were able to confirm that the respondents, although constituted 32% (56 persons) of the total number of graduates, very accurately represented the whole graduates' population per year and per subject. We were therefore confident that the findings of this survey would be highly reliable and reflective on the entire population of non-respondents as well.

Before we proceed with the analysis of the received feedback forms, we need to highlight two interesting points. First, both the Bachelor's and Master's courses use the same books and therefore there was no need to differentiate between the book related responses given by BA or MA graduates. The second point has to do with the high percentage of respondents who did sign their name although we secured anonymity of the replies and did not request for signatures. Twenty out of the fifty-six respondents (36%) signed their names and included a few comments for our perusal thus making their replies more "valuable" to us comparing to the anonymous ones. After this necessary parenthesis, let's attempt to analyse the received feedback forms.

The first main category of questions was related to the course materials for the four WBL modules (2/4802, 2/4810, 3/4825, 3/4840/60). The respondents characterised the level of the course materials as poor, adequate, good and excellent and we introduced numbers (1 for poor, 2 for adequate, 3 for good and 4 for excellent) to enable us to calculate the arithmetic means as defined above (5.1). The level of the course materials for the module 2/4802 was found to be poor by four graduates, adequate by twenty four, good by twenty five and excellent by three graduates.

The arithmetic mean was calculated as follows:  $(4 \times 1) + (24 \times 2) + (25 \times 3) + (3 \times 4) = 139$ , which was then divided by 56 to produce 2.48 as the arithmetic mean.

2/4802	2/4810	3/4825	3/4840/60	Overall
2.48	2.57	2.45	2.68	2.54

Table 4 Arithmetic means for the course materials per module

Table 4 provides a summary of the arithmetic means per module and the overall score (all the scores for all the participants/modules were added and the sum was divided by 224). It appeared that the level of the materials for all the modules was between good and adequate with the booklet on research methodology (3/4825) to achieve the lowest score (2.45) and the booklet on the work based project (3/4840/60) the highest (2.68). The “similar” score for the four booklets was due to the majority of the respondents (30) rating the materials with identical marks for the four modules. The low score of the 3/4825 was due to a significant percentage (14%) of the participants to rate the quality of this booklet as “poor” with only 7% to characterise it as excellent. However, even those participants who gave excellent grade for the 3/4825 believed that “improvements are necessary”. In other words, a more accurate word to express their point of view should have been “good” rather than “excellent”, thus further lowering the arithmetic mean.

It should be mentioned that the 3/4825 booklet was improved for the academic year 2000-01 and this was reflected on its score that increased from 2.39 (given by the 33 respondents who graduated in 1998, 1999, 2000) to 2.52 (by the 23 graduates of the year 2001). The Research Methods document was improved considerably during the past academic year and its score is expected to further rise by the 2002 graduates. The feedback from this group will indicate whether additional amendments are necessary to be made or not. We tried to relate the responses to the various respondents’ working fields and the results were extremely interesting.

Subject	2/4802	2/4810	3/4825	4840/60	Overall
Insurance	2.43	2.56	2.44	2.62	2.52
Education	2.09	2.18	1.73	2.45	2.11

Table 5 Arithmetic means for the course materials per module for the main respondents’ working areas

Actually, we compared the arithmetic means for the two main groups (those who work in the insurance and education areas), which accounted for almost half (48%) of the respondents. The findings are presented in the Table 5.

Educators have been a lot stricter (due to their expertise in development and evaluation of curriculum materials for students at the post secondary education) in their ratings on the course materials comparing to the insurance agents / managers. The latter provided answers, which led to arithmetic means that were very close to the above-presented means (Table 4). However, the respondents from the education field rated the materials only marginally above the adequate level. Exception was the material for the 3/4825 module, which was not assessed as adequate enough with arithmetic mean below the “2” mark. The impact of the low grades by the educators was not that strong on the overall picture simply because it was only 11 of them (20%) who responded to our questionnaire (vs. 16 from the insurance area). Their opinions were very close to each other (9 out of 11 and 6 out of 11 agreed that the level of the materials for the modules 2/4810 and 3/4825 was adequate and poor respectively). The impact of the 2000-01 booklets (3/4825) improvement exercise was very strong as the score given by 9 educators graduated in 1998, 1999, 2000 was only 1.30 but the two respondents who graduated in 2001 evaluated the level of the revised booklets as good and excellent (score 3.50). However, this is only an indicative score as it was emerged by the answers of only two educators.

We went through the remarks contributed by the respondents to justify their views on the course materials. The list below summarises the most common answers related to the necessary improvements:

- better books – with no further clarifications (7 answers)
- better translation/adaptation to the Greek language (6 answers)
- more clear/explicit booklets (5 answers)
- more examples across all booklets (4 answers)
- more research methodology notes (2 answers)

The respondents rated the level of each module material separately but they did not really specify material improvements for every single module as their comments were on all the booklets in general. The level of tutor support in the classroom and the level of the personal

advisor support for the final project (projects in the case of BA) achieved substantially better remarks from our graduates comparing to those on course materials.

Support	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
Tutor - class	-----	21	50	29
Personal - project	2	12	54	32

Table 6 Percentage distribution of tutor and personal levels of support

Table 6 presents the percentage distribution for both levels of support. The vast majority of our graduates found the tutor support in the classroom and personal support for the final project good or excellent. In fact almost 9 out of 10 graduates (86%) viewed the personal support as at least good and the same applies to 8 out of 10 graduates (79%) for the classroom support.

The 2% of the respondents that classified the personal advisor support level as poor actually referred to one only graduate (postgraduate level) who commented that “due to the limited number of meetings with the personal advisor the level of support was rather poor”. This percentage was extremely low and indicated that no action was necessary to bring improvements in the support provided. However, we should only take a note that a number of respondents (8) who considered the support level as good or excellent believed that “more contacts with the personal advisors are necessary for better project supervision”.

It was previously mentioned (Ch. 1 – Introduction) that after completion of WBL programmes students increased their productivity and effectiveness as they got more involved in how their organisation works while they also discovered and developed knowledge embedded in their practice. In our case the results are similar to the above, as almost all (95%) the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that after completing their studies their productivity increased through reinforcing existing knowledge and experience. The remaining 5% (or 3 persons) did not provide sufficient evidence to justify their opinion (disagree - 1 person, undecided – 2 persons). The person who disagreed was a BA graduate (year 2001) who overall provided rather “strong” comments on the previous questions (e.g. poor level of material for all modules but excellent level of personal advisor support for the final projects) without any justification for his thoughts.

Another benefit that a WBL graduate may receive (apart from productivity increase) after completing his/her studies is the career advancement. The most significant percentage of our graduates (38%) has not seen any contribution yet from their WBL award towards their career advancement. Three out of ten (30%) perceived this contribution as marginal and another 11% believed that the WBL has not helped their career to advance at all. The remaining 21% provided positive responses as they agreed with the statement “the WBL degree helped to advance their career very much”.

We need to highlight at this point that signs of career advancement due to obtaining a degree might take some time to become obvious and it was apparently too early to evaluate the award contribution for the 2001 graduates towards advancing their careers. A more realistic approach was to breakdown the responses by year of graduation and take into more serious consideration the feedback from the early graduates (i.e. those who completed their studies in 1998, 1999 and 2000). This breakdown per year of graduation is presented at the Table 7.

Graduation year	Not at all	Not yet	Not much	Very much
1998	33	33	-----	34
1999	10	10	55	25
2000	20	50	30	-----
2001	4	57	13	26

Table 7 Percentage distribution of WBL award contribution towards career advancement per graduation year

The 1998 graduates who participated in our survey were only three and each of them had different opinion (not at all, not yet, very much) in terms of career advancement after the graduation. Only one of them provided some remarks: “the WBL award did not help towards career advancement due to lack of recognition by public authorities”. The survey participants who graduated in 1999 was a large group of 20 persons and three out of four (75%) considered that their award did not contribute much to their career advancement (55%) or did not contribute at all (10%) / not yet (10%). Most of them who answered “not yet / not at all” were working in the education area which is of public nature and – as mentioned before - had not recognised the WBL awards yet. The working fields for those who experienced high WBL award contribution to their career progress were insurance, sales, finance and information technology.

Only 10 of our survey participants graduated in the year 2000 and 7 of them considered that their award has not contributed at all or has not contributed yet towards advancing their career. It is worth mentioning that none from this group expressed the thought that the degree has helped very much. Due to the small number of respondents from this graduation year, no clear trend can be established in terms of the relationship between the working fields and award contribution for career advancement.

The graduates of 2001 have provided 23 responses but due to the limited time that has passed since graduation the most common answer was “not yet” (13 or 57%) as expected. It should be noted that the next largest group (6 responses or 26%) were the graduates their WBL degree has helped them very much in their career. Their working areas varied with information technology to be the most common area (3), followed by insurance and finance.

We calculated the percentages for the responses given by the graduates of the years 1998 / 1999 / 2000 only and we ended up with different findings comparing to the ones mentioned above when all the responses from graduates of all years were taken into account. The “not much” became the most often given answer (42% vs. 30% before), while the “not at all” accounted for 15% of the answers comparing to 11% before. The overall negative percentage (“not at all”, “not yet”, “not much”) slightly increased to 82% from 79%.

A perfect score was achieved in the next question which had to do with matching of expectations from the WBL programmes. An overwhelming percentage (96%) confirmed that the WBL programmes they attended managed to match their initial expectations. Only 2 persons replied negatively due to “level of books” and “lack of state recognition” for the WBL awards. Matching of the initial expectations by almost all the graduates-respondents was directly related to their willingness to recommend our programmes to others. An extremely high percentage (82%) commented “they will very likely recommend the WBL degree to others”. The remaining 18% (10 persons) considered that “it is unlikely to recommend” (9 persons), while one respondent was still undecided. Insufficient explanation was provided by the “unlikely to recommend” group, but the three only answers we received were relevant to the “lack of state recognition” for the WBL degrees.

The last question of our survey produced interesting feedback to us for further programme improvements. Four out of five respondents (80%) believed that improvements should be made to the currently provided programmes. This percentage was unexpectedly high as a much higher percentage (96%) confirmed previously that our programmes matched their expectations. The participants were asked to identify the areas they thought needed improvements and below we list the feedback received:

- Books (25 answers) improvement: better translation/adaptation to Greek language, more explicit, more examples.
- Supervision (9 answers) improvement: more meetings for modules / project work.
- Recognition (6 answers) improvement: the point that is currently missing from our courses to be characterised as the “best course for any professional working either in the private or in the public sector of the economy”.
- Level (3 answers) improvement: a small group of graduates considered that the level of studies was “not adequately high” for a postgraduate course and efforts should be made to increase the level of difficulty and requirements from the students.

The presented graduates’ satisfaction survey included feedback received from the graduates of the years 1998 – 2001. This survey is to be conducted on an on-going basis in the future to provide continuously recommendations for potential improvements to be made. This research activity is nothing else but an action research (as the one on the current potential student profile) that operates in cycles (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996) with the four first steps already completed (ask questions – collect data – analyse – formulate hypothesis/reflect). The remaining two steps (plan action steps – positive action for change) are linked to the action to be taken, which, in accordance with our survey findings, should focus on the course material improvement. An exercise should be implemented to further improve the WBS module booklets, starting with the one on the research methodology (after the feedback from the graduates of the year 2002 is received). Improvement recommendations in other areas (e.g. tutor support in the classroom or personal advisor supervision for the final project) were noted but no immediate action was necessary to be taken. However, what it is essential to be done is to gather feedback in these areas from future graduates and then decide about the most suitable course of action.

The identified action area refers to the last stage of the action research cycle. The on-going nature of this survey will enable all the future graduates to evaluate the improved booklets. We are confident that the arithmetic means of the levels of the course materials will have been remarkably improved after the implementation of the recommended changes. It is also anticipated that future surveys will – most likely – identify additional issues with new action research cycles to commence by asking new research questions. The outcome of the continuous research and action taking will eventually advance the satisfaction level of our graduates, which in turn will further increase the number of recommendations by them with major impact on the student recruitment level.

### 5.3 WORK BASED LEARNING STUDIES' PERCEPTION

The ultimate objective of the research activity in this project is to improve the student recruitment rates. This can be achieved by recruiting students either on individual basis or on corporate basis. The previously conducted surveys (identification of current potential student profile – 5.1 and evaluation of past graduates satisfaction – 5.2) were associated with the recruitment issue for individuals. GCWBLP had to explore alternative ways to build student recruitment from corporations by effectively marketing WBL programmes. The starting point for successful marketing of WBL programmes was the evaluation of the work based learning concept perception on corporate level, which required a research to be conducted.

The survey concentrated on two industries only (insurance and banking) for the reasons that have been previously (4.3.3) explained. The above-presented questionnaire (Appendix 1C) was applied to collect the necessary feedback from training managers working within the two identified markets. Let's go through the survey findings starting with those from the insurance companies.

#### 5.3.1 INSURANCE COMPANIES

It is the market that GCWBLP has managed to penetrate very successfully with the Interamerican partnership that resulted in a total number of about 100 students to enrol in our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes during the period September 1998 to April 1999. It was initially thought that the above number was only the start with similar ones to follow on a regular basis for the years to come. The Centre has not approached any other



insurance companies for marketing purposes since 1999 due to the Interamerican's wish to "have the exclusivity in their industry as far as the WBL studies are concerned". However, the expectations for further admissions have not been materialised yet. The time has therefore come for the Centre to first evaluate the WBL concept perception by insurance corporations and next (based on the received feedback) to aggressively "promote" the programmes to these organisations.

But before we proceed with this evaluation, it is worthy to take a close look at the status of the insurance market – as of early 2002 - in terms of its growth potential as this potential is directly related to our success in marketing of our programmes. The key market data presented below was provided by the Association of Insurance Companies of Greece.

The insurance market has experienced dynamic growth over the last twelve years with double-digit growth rates for the total insurance premiums collected since 1990. The peak of this period was achieved in 1999 with 25% growth rate after two years of satisfactory growth rates (12% and 15% for 1997 and 1998 respectively). Unfortunately, the growth rate dropped to only 7% in 2000, while growth close to zero was accomplished in 2001. The impact of the above growth levels on the industry's profit was very obvious: Insurance companies' profit went up by 438% in 1999 comparing to the one of 1998 but in 2000 this profit's growth was negative (-52%) and the same was the case for 2001. According to a recent industry review (Magazine *Economicos Tachydromos*, 17 November 2001), it was anticipated that most of the companies will present losses or very marginal profits in their Profit & Loss Accounts due to be published towards the end of 2002. The industry developments of the last two years resulted in an impressive shrinkage of the insurance enterprises number from 163 in 1992 to only 110 in 2000. However, the concentration has always been extremely high with the top 15 companies to account for 97% and 73% of the market shares in the life insurance and the non-life insurance markets respectively. Our research therefore had to target the top 15 companies only or actually the top 14 as Interamerican was out of our research activity for obvious reasons. However, we will also approach Interamerican to receive feedback from their experience after a large number of their consultants and managers have studied (or about to complete their studies) for a WBL award. The results will be discussed later (5.3.3).

Our survey was based on questionnaire (Appendix 1C) and semi-structured interviews. The research plan was carefully prepared and an advertising activity preceded our research. It was actually a two-page editorial (Appendix 2) on Middlesex University and WBL studies including interviews with two of the Interamerican graduates at BA and MA levels on the benefits they received by undertaking WBL courses. It was published in the magazine “Asfalistiki Agora” (issue December 2001) and intended to simply present the philosophy behind the programmes from the journalist’s point of view without mentioning anything about the Centre (telephone, address etc). This editorial was followed by a half page advertisement in the same magazine (issue January 2002). The objective of this two-month coordinated advertising effort was first to raise awareness for the WBL concept through a credible article and second to generate enquiries from people who read the article in December but managed to find the contact details only the following month.

We approached 14 insurance companies by direct mail, which was completed by end of January 2002. The info pack (sent to the 14 training managers and branch managers of the key branches around the country) included a cover letter, the brochure and the two-page editorial mentioned above. Overall 17 interviews were conducted with twelve training managers and five branch managers. The above-mentioned number of 14 companies actually referred to 12 companies only due to the soon-to-be completed mergers of Commercial Union with Scoplife and Metrolife Emporiki with Phoenix.

The first information requested (as per questionnaire) was the number of employees that helped to establish the company’s size. However, it was noticed that although a number of employees (financial consultants) were working on a temporary or part-time basis, companies tended to include this number to the full-time staff, thus making the identification of the real full-timers number an extremely difficult task. A better size indicator seemed to be the market share instead. We will therefore refer in our analysis to the market share for the life insurance segment (the largest segment within the whole insurance market) as an indicator of size and significance in the insurance market.

It was very clear that almost all the companies provide both in-house and external training to their consultants. The in-house mostly referred to the training provided on the companies’ products and services, with emphasis on the new product launches. The relatively larger

companies tended to organise seminars on sales techniques and motivation. They usually provided external training related to various subjects such as financial planning and analysis and (rarely) information technology for the insurance market. It seemed that the main criterion for the selection of the training programmes was the trainees' needs with other elements to be considered (companies' needs) as well.

Almost all the participants were not aware about the WBL concept prior to our direct mail campaign with the exception of the International Life and Generali Life training managers who - as ex-Interamerican training officers - had heard before about the existence of our courses, without having a clear idea about the way our programmes work. About half of the training managers noticed our editorial, but it was the information pack they received that enabled them to establish a fuller understanding about the work based learning philosophy and benefits an organisation receives from the employees' participation in WBL programmes.

The perception of the WBL studies by the training managers was first evaluated against three criteria-benefits from an organisation's point of view: subject-based knowledge creation, intellectual capital increase and employee's productivity increase. It was communicated to them during the interview-presentation that employees who had completed WBL programmes developed knowledge through undertaking work based projects and enhancement of their project management and methodological skills and subsequently performed better than before as they had a better understanding of their work role and organisation's objectives. It appears, that our arguments were -to a certain extent- convincing as slightly more than 50% of the training managers (7 out of 12) believed that WBL studies create knowledge of direct value for the organisation through the work based projects. However, they were very sceptical on the issue of explicit knowledge creation from the accumulated tacit knowledge, while all of them found hard to perceive WBL as a field of study apart from the "mode of study" perception. The remaining five appeared to be undecided about the above issue. Almost all the training managers (10 out of 12 to be precise) were positive that the WBL studies increase the organisation's intellectual capital. However, opinions varied significantly in the case of the third criterion. Five out of 12 managers disagreed with the statement that "the employee's productivity increases through engaging in R&D activities and reinforcing existing knowledge and experience". From the remaining seven respondents only three agreed with the statement and four could not decide.

It was only marginally perceived by the training managers (seven respondents) that work based learning is an improvement to the currently available educational programmes. Nobody disagreed with this point of view, as the rest of the participants had not formulated an opinion yet (undecided).

The feeling from the above-presented responses was that WBL, generally speaking, was perceived with certain degree of scepticism as reflected on the significant number of undecided respondents towards the WBL benefits, although most of the managers considered our programmes as an improvement to the existing ones. The level of “undecided” managers was remarkably high (8 out of 12) in the question about their willingness to recommend to their organisations our courses for sponsoring. It was more likely that the “undecided” would not recommend our programmes to the senior management within the following 6 months as none of them expressed interest for further discussion or presentation.

It was however encouraging that one training manager (Nationale Nederlanden or NN) stated that he would “very likely” propose our programmes to his company with another three managers (Allianz, International Life and Generali Life) to confirm that it was “likely” to do so in the future. However, it was anticipated that the latter three managers would put forward their proposal not earlier than September 2002, with possible results expected towards the end of 2002 or even early 2003. On the contrary, results were expected sooner from NN as a second presentation was made a couple of weeks after the first one and the training manager confirmed that an approximate number of 15 students (branch managers with 10-15 years of working experience) were to be joining our postgraduate programmes during the academic year 2002-03. The prospects for a long-term partnership with NN are excellent as the company is a major player in the insurance market (19% market share of the life insurance market vs. 20% of Interamerican which is the market leader) with an extensive network around Greece (approximately 75 branches). From the other three companies with partnership potential, Allianz is within the top five players (7% market share), while the other two command relatively small market share (Generali Life, 2% - International Life, 0.6%).

The remaining eight training managers left not much room for the possibility of potential partnerships in the near future for various reasons such as: “lack of state recognition” as mentioned by Ethniki Asfalistikiki (14% market share) and Metrolife Emporiki (7%); “the

management has currently other priorities (i.e. sales targets achievement, merger procedures) as expressed by Aspis Pronoia (4%) and Commercial Union (0.5%) respectively; “company currently sponsors other programmes” as noted by Alpha (3%), Alico (8%) and Evropaiki Pisti (1%). We should mention at this point that the managers from these three companies were not negative towards WBL and a second approach in the future may yield better results for the Centre comparing to the ones from the first approach. Finally, a completely negative point of view was expressed by Agrotiki (7%) stating “the company policy is to sponsor only short to mid-term seminars and not long-term university programmes”.

The five interviews conducted with the branch managers brought no solid results, but only expectations for limited recruitment of insurance consultants on individual basis (i.e. not sponsored by their company). The managers responded to the info pack and approached us due to their own personal interest to study for a postgraduate course. They were all in charge of a remarkable number of insurance consultants and they provided in-house training mostly for new products and services according to the specific trainees’ needs. Three out of five (the other two were undecided) stated that they believed WBL creates knowledge of direct value for their organisation and increases the employee’s productivity and four out of five agreed with the statement that the programmes increase the company’s intellectual capital. Three out of five strongly agreed or agreed with the point that WBL is an improvement on the currently available education programmes. From the remaining two, one was still undecided and the other one disagreed as he actually required knowledge and believed that the WBL was inappropriate for him to fulfil this objective.

The sample of the five branch managers (who work for four different companies) was too small and obviously was not representative enough to enable us to come up with general conclusions. The positive outcome was apparently the personal interest from branch managers, which may lead to a small group of insurance consultants registering for the courses in the future. The students will cover their own fees and the training departments will not get involved at all. It is therefore feasible to initiate co-operation with insurance companies without the assistance of the training managers, but this co-operation can only be on a small-scale basis. However, this small-scale co-operation will raise WBL awareness within the organisation and if successful, it may help to establish a long-term large-scale partnership with the company.

In summary, the WBL concept was received positively by the majority of the training managers who participated in our survey. The level of scepticism generated by the WBL benefits was fully understood, as most of the managers were not aware of this concept at all prior to our direct mail activity. The success of our research activity was associated with the enrolment expectation (15 students) in the near future (academic year 2002-03). The potential for more partnerships is high for another three companies although the insurance market has been undergoing tough times during the period 2001-02 with decreasing (if not negative) profits that resulted to a number of mergers. We should continue our recruitment efforts by approaching again the training managers with positive attitude towards WBL who claimed that “timing is not great now, but interest might be higher in WBL programmes a few months down the road”.

### 5.3.2 BANKING ORGANISATIONS

The banking sector is the largest service sector in the Greek Economy in terms of personnel with approximately 63,000 employees working for Greek commercial, foreign and cooperative banks and specialised credit institutions (Hellenic Bank Association Data as of 31/12/2000). The size of this industry attracted our attention as it provides huge recruitment potential for our WBL studies. The banking industry is highly concentrated with a small number (5) of large players who employ 65% of all the banking employees. The same level of concentration is obvious in the market place in terms of market shares within the various market segments. For example, the housing loan market is dominated by the National Bank (48% market share), while two banks (National Bank and Eurobank) control the 48% of the consumer loan market (Magazine *Economicos Tachydromos*, 6 October 2001).

The total number of employees working for the Greek commercial banks (total 12 banks) is approximately 49,000, while another 4,700 people are working for foreign banks (21). The 10 specialised credit institutions employ 8,700 persons and the 15 cooperative banks only 380. We approached 18 banks to conduct our research from the first three segments. The breakdown was as follows: 11 commercial banks, 5 foreign banks and 2 specialised credit institutions. Total personnel employed: 58,700 or 93% of all the banking sector employees. In other words, the research sample almost covered the banking sector and our results were therefore expected to be highly reliable.

We decided to adopt a slightly different method to approach the bank training managers comparing to the one we implemented before to approach the insurance companies' training managers. The personalised letter to these managers introduced exclusive WBL programmes for banking employees at postgraduate level only (MA in Banking and Finance). This approach was based on the fact that no BA WBL graduate/current student has come/comes from the banking sector and it was obviously thought that there would be no interest at all in undergraduate studies. Our cover letter was accompanied by both our brochures (English and Greek versions) and strongly highlighted the programme benefits from the bank's point of view. The information material was sent early March 2002 and the interviews with the training managers were completed by end of April 2002. The following paragraphs furnish a detailed review of the results.

Banks provide an extensive number of training programmes to their personnel of both types (in-house and external). However, the big size banking organisations have established their own training centres, which – to a large extent - cover the personnel training needs satisfactorily thus leaving a small percentage of training programmes to be conducted externally. All the training managers indicated the information technology related training as the area that covered the majority of the training programmes offered. This was due to the efforts banks have been making to provide technologically advanced services (internet banking, m-banking etc) to their clientele. Bank personnel needed to continuously undertake training to stay informed with the latest IT developments applicable to their working field. Second most important area for training was the new product knowledge as indicated especially by the training managers of the largest four commercial banks. The frequent introduction of new retail products (loans, saving accounts, credit cards etc) required staff with very good product knowledge and selling skills to successfully promote those products. Banks continuously organise regularly training programmes to advance the product knowledge and enhance the selling capabilities of their personnel.

The main criterion for selection of the training programmes was the bank's needs as expressed by all the training managers. Banks seemed to adopt a completely different approach from that of the insurance companies to decide on their educational programmes. It was found from our research that they took into consideration the various developments in innovation (e.g. new systems and products to be introduced) and selected the most suitable

training programmes to meet the corporate training needs. The insurance companies (being smaller) appeared to look closely at trainees' needs and made final decisions by taking into consideration the needs of both parties (company and personnel).

Our programmes had achieved a low level of awareness prior to my survey. Only four out of 18 managers mentioned that they had heard about the WBL concept before, either from their employees (3) – a WBL graduate or current student - or through our advertisement (1). However, none of them had a complete idea of how the concept is applied and how the programme works.

We conveyed to the bank training managers messages similar to the ones conveyed to the insurance training managers regarding the knowledge development through undertaking work based projects and enhancement of project management and methodological skills and performance improvement for employees who had completed WBL programmes before. The results were also similar to the above-mentioned ones as a marginal majority of the respondents (10 out of 18) agreed with the point that “the WBL studies create knowledge of direct value for the organisation through the final work based project”. No participant disagreed with the above WBL benefit, as actually the remaining 8 were undecided. However, disagreements did occur (two participants) on whether the WBL studies increase the organisation's intellectual capital or not. Half of the respondents agreed with this point of view, while the rest (7) were undecided. As previously with the insurance companies, bank training managers also perceived WBL as a mode of study only and not as a field of study that helps the organisation to create explicit work based knowledge. We experienced stronger disagreements about the impact of WBL on the employee's productivity. Two out of three participants disagreed with the point that “the employee's productivity increases through engaging in R&D activities and reinforcing existing knowledge”. In fact nobody agreed with this statement, as the other six did not have a clear opinion (undecided).

The next question provided a very good feeling about the overall WBL perception by the training managers as they were asked to express their agreement / disagreement about the statement that “the WBL studies is an improvement on the currently available educational programmes”. The general feeling was not that good, as only four out of 18 agreed, six of them disagreed and the remaining eight were undecided. Training managers at the banking



sector considered the knowledge to be acquired as one of the key programme elements and “improvement on the current programmes” for them obviously meant “more specialised or advanced knowledge acquisition”. Our expectations for the managers to recommend the WBL programmes to their organisation were rather low, taking the above feedback into consideration. It was not a surprise therefore that 14 training managers replied that “it is unlikely they will recommend” our programmes, with the other four of them to be undecided about it.

The perception survey in the banking sector did not generate tangible results the way the similar survey did in the insurance industry. Banks offer training programmes to upgrade skills and capabilities (in new systems, new services / products) so that the staff will be working more effectively within a fast progressing banking environment. Banks view the training programmes from their own point of view (their needs) unlike the insurance companies, which seriously consider the trainee’s needs as well. A bank training manager will first look at the learning outcomes of an educational programme and then make his proposal about alternative programmes. Obviously, WBL studies by offering no taught modules are not expected to have remarkable success within the banking sector in the form of a strong partnership established with the contribution of training / human resources managers.

The semi-structured interviews with the training managers revealed that the banks’ policies in terms of sponsoring postgraduate studies are quite strict: They either partly sponsor very limited number of employees for MA programmes “if they are directly related to the employee’s job nature and improve his existing knowledge” (Eurobank’s policy) or they don’t sponsor MA programmes at all (policy of Laiki Bank and Bank of Greece). A number of banks that are eager to sponsor MA programmes are currently focusing on their strategic development (Alpha bank, Geniki) and implementation of new training programmes is not within the priorities of the top management for the period of the next 6 months.

Does the above feedback mean that the WBL concept has no future in the banking industry? No, it does not mean that at all. The feedback simply means that we will not be able to penetrate the banking sector by approaching the training managers. We should target every single bank employee as an individual who will –most likely- have to sponsor his/her studies by him/herself, as it has been the case with our graduates and current students from the

banking segment. The bank training managers do not perceive the WBL studies benefits very well, but the WBL award - as we are aware from our graduates - has been well received and has contributed to the graduates' career development.

To summarise, the work based learning concept has not received overall positive perception by the majority of the banking training managers, due to the specific requirements which training programmes should meet in this sector. It is unlikely that banks will sponsor MA studies of their employees if there is no specific and relevant subject-based knowledge acquired, but it is likely that a significant number of these employees will join our programmes to further advance their career. Our marketing efforts should try to approach every single bank employee and to identify ways to increase the awareness of the WBL studies across the banking sector, as its huge size (63,000 employees) guarantees excellent recruitment prospects.

### 5.3.3 COMPANIES CURRENTLY SPONSOR WBL STUDIES

The primary business development efforts since GCWBLP commenced its operations in 1997 were concentrated on increasing the WBL concept awareness through presentations to a number of selected organisations from both the public and the private sectors. More than 20 organisations were approached and three of them (in the insurance, telecommunications and soft drink industries) took the decision to sponsor their employees for WBL studies. Overall, the recruitment results exceeded by far the initial expectations but this was solely due to the spectacular contribution of the insurance company, as the response from the other two companies was rather moderate.

Undoubtedly, the partnership with Interamerican (the largest life insurance company in Greece) has been the most successful business development endeavour of the GCWBLP until now. Following a series of presentations to the head of human resources and sales development departments, a group of 40 students enrolled in the postgraduate programmes in September 1998 and another group of 62 students joined the undergraduate programmes in April 1999. A tailor-made BA course was developed to include two specialised seminars of 20 credits each (at Level 3) to further enhance the knowledge of the insurance consultants. The MA programme was delivered without any additions/modifications. In both cases, the

company partly sponsored the student tuition fees with percentages directly related to their sales performances.

The academic progress of the postgraduate students was rather average with only 50% of them graduated in 1999 and another 30% completed their studies the following year. However, the undergraduate students' progress was well below average with only 20 (out of 62) and 24 of them to graduate in June 2001 and June 2002 respectively although the programme was scheduled for completion in February 2001. If we attempt to analyse the reasons for this performance, we will need first to take a close look at the job nature of the BA students.

Almost all the undergraduate students were insurance agents on commission basis who enjoyed exceptionally high incomes in 1999 thanks to the extraordinary performance of investments (mainly mutual funds) reflected from the outstanding indices movements in the Athens Stock Exchange during the above year. This euphoric climate was slowly becoming reverse with effect from early 2000 and the BA students cited the negative market sentiment as the main reason for the slow academic progress as "they had to work very hard during the years 2000 and 2001 to achieve their targets and secure their incomes". Apart from this change of priorities, the students lost their initial enthusiasm because of difficulties associated with comprehension of the WBL documentation (i.e. module handbooks) and the programme delivery mode with one group for all BA students for the first three modules, which resulted in reduced learning/understanding outcomes from the tutorials.

Despite these problems, the participation of the Interamerican training manager, senior sales managers and a large number of branch managers in the programmes verified the excellent WBL studies' reception by the company. Interamerican perceived WBL studies as a way to create knowledge of direct value, to increase its intellectual capital and employees' productivity through working under a more systematic and organised way.

However, this exceptional perception of the programmes has not led to further admissions by students-insurance consultants. One of the two key reasons has to do with the model of the partnership with Interamerican. No accreditation of the company's training courses was involved in the WBL programmes and therefore WBL did not manage to be embedded in the

company's continuous professional development framework. Consequently, WBL was not regarded as a potential source of organisational learning but as a negotiable extra. The second major reason is associated with the acquisition of Interamerican by the leading pan-European financial group Eureko B.V. The acquisition was announced in September 2001 and since then the company has been undergoing an extensive restructuring process according to a new business plan developed by Eureko. This strategic change had an obvious impact on all the companies' operations and obviously on the training department as well. Training programmes have been going through the scrutiny of the new management team and decisions have been put on hold, leaving limited room for further student recruitment on WBL courses.

It now seems that the opportunity for the GCWBLP exists no longer with Interamerican but with other insurance companies. The expertise acquired by the successful partnership with Interamerican should be the platform for further partnerships within the insurance industry. The anticipated enrolment of 15 students-branch managers from the key insurance player Nationale Nederlanden (presented above in 5.3.1) confirms that the WBL concept has still high potential in the insurance market.

Panavox, a company fully owned by Panafon (a major player in the local mobile telecommunications market), perceived very well the WBL studies' benefits after several presentations were made during the first half of 1998. The company decided - on a pilot basis - to fully sponsor WBL programmes for a limited number of high calibre staff. Two senior employees (Planning Manager and Financial Analyst) enrolled in the DProf programme in October 1998 with the objective to undertake a joint doctorate project in the area of strategic management. Panavox was given a discount for the above students as an incentive for further student registrations in the postgraduate programmes. However, no employees have been proposed for MA programmes since then but only two junior employees of Unifon (a company with 20% Panafon's shareholding) enrolled for BA courses (in 1999 and 2000) instead. The telecommunication industry has been undergoing drastic and continuous changes locally over the last few years, which had a major impact on the development of the partnership between Panavox and GCWBLP. Panavox was renamed Panafon Emporiki which along with Unifon were absorbed by Panafon-Vodafone in October 2000. This merger was completed in May 2001 and eight months later the group corporate name changed to

Vodafone to indicate that it is part of the largest mobile telecommunications network company in the world.

The above on going company transformations along with the resignation of one of the DProf students before the completion of the first year's academic requirements resulted in scepticism and review of the employees' sponsorship policy for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The prospects for further recruitment are not great, although a limited number (1-2) may be joining the undergraduate courses as the progress of the BA students has been satisfactory and the feedback from their participation has been overall positive.

The recruitment prospects seem to be more promising from the third partnership GCWBLP has established with Tria Epsilon (Hellenic Bottling Company, HBC). The company began bottling Coca-Cola in Greece in 1969 and became a public listed corporation in 1991. In 1999, HBC was merged with Coca-Cola Beverages plc, which has offices in London and Vienna. The new group, Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company serves a population of 400 million people in 26 countries.

The WBL programmes were presented to the training manager in April 2000. HBC's training policy aims to provide training that enhances the personnel's knowledge in their respective fields. The programmes are conducted either locally or in Ireland where the European corporate training centre is located. The WBL programmes were perceived well and their proven benefits for the employer convinced the training manager to recommend them for sponsoring. Finally, two employees (mid-level sales managers) enrolled at the postgraduate level in 2000 and one account executive in 2001. All of them had no basic academic qualifications but extensive experience in the sales field and good career development potential within the company.

The low recruitment level – so far - has been due to the company's policy to basically sponsor training programmes (usually short-term seminars) that cater for the employees' training needs and only exceptionally to finance postgraduate programmes. In the latter case, priority is usually given to mid and upper level managers of high career potential to pursue one of the executive development programmes (e.g. M.B.A.) offered by the Athens Laboratory of

Business Administration (ALBA) in which HBC is a corporate member. ALBA is a leading business school in Greece that operates as a non-profit joint initiative of various professional bodies. Corporate Members enjoy free enrolment for one participant in the MBA programmes, volume discounts for additional participants in the same programmes, discounted rates in all executive education programmes etc.

In spite of the low enrolment rates, the increasing WBL programmes' awareness within HBC resulted in another three (self-financing) students to join the MA programmes in 2000 and 2001. The future recruitment prospects – taking into consideration the current training policy - do not seem to secure high WBL students volume, but the very good programmes' perception is a positive sign for a continuous student flow in the future.

Hellenic Bottling Company, the biggest Greek-based multinational corporation today, is definitely the only company from the above-presented three organisations that still offers promising business development opportunities and GCWBLP should try to explore ways to maximise the recruitment levels of employees either company-sponsored or self-financed.

#### 5.4 MARKETING THE PROGRAMMES OVERSEAS

The attraction of work based learning studies ensured a regular flow of students and organisations to enrol during the first few years after its inception (1993) in the UK and led to the thought that a marketing development strategy was not necessary. The pioneer work of NCWBLP in this field was rewarded with the Queen's Anniversary Prize (1996) the logo of which was to be used on all the materials until February 2000. The NCWBLP's success very soon attracted the interest of other academic organisations, which commenced work on developing models of work based learning programmes that were customised for particular organisations. Government interventions to foster new learning initiatives such as work based learning took a strategic view in 1998, based on the country's perceived needs for economic success and the view that (Campbell, 1999) the nurturing and development of an organisation's workforce is the only competitive advantage in the new marketplace. The need for the NCWBLP to develop and implement a marketing strategy was becoming increasingly important due to the intensifying competitiveness in the external environment and the requirement to maintain its market leader position and achieve recruitment targets.

The core idea of the market development strategy stemmed from the partnership concept due to the uniqueness of the WBS “product”: the learning of the individual always interfaces with the organisational objectives of the employer so as to generate the capacity to build intellectual capital. According to Naish (1998), WBS approach works with the present learning and with the learning development needs of the organisation in real terms. The NCWBLP market development strategy was (and still is) founded around the partnership thinking and intended (intends) to establish partnerships with private organisations, local authorities, national councils etc.

The marketing strategy derived from the above-defined partnership concept has been implemented by NCWBLP with remarkable success as it is demonstrated by the large number of partnerships in miscellaneous areas such as: Business and Commercial organisations (Bovis UK), Local Educational Authorities (London Borough of Enfield), Colleges of Further Education (Harlow College), National Councils (The Arts Council of England), Arts Organisations (British Film Institute), Overseas Centres (Greek Centre and East Asia Centre of WBL Partnerships) etc. Partnerships often incorporate accreditation of in-house courses delivered by others (Bovis) and become highly successful if they manage to lead to problem solving. Although it takes time to develop and implement partnerships, the strategic development of the partnership portfolio has had a very strong impact on the recruitment numbers: the total actual student number enrolled for a WBL course doubled from 450 students in 1996/7 to almost 900 for the academic year 2001/2. This number includes 420 students from the three overseas Centres (in Greece, East Asia and Cyprus) and about 144 students who are currently pursuing their DProf awards through the NCWBLP.

The business development plan of NCWBLP aims to bring new partners on board. Presentations to various organisations and seminars for senior personnel in local authorities are mainly used to attract potential partners. WBL studies have not been advertised in the media as no budget has been allocated for advertising purposes. However, editorials about WBL studies do appear on the net such as the extensive presentation of the programmes in the Marine Society web site. The success of the WBL presentations to several interested organisations over the last twelve months and their impact on the student recruitment rates was the subject of my research that was conducted during the period March-April 2002.

The one-page questionnaire (presented as Appendix 1D) was applied to collect (via e-mail) the necessary information from the team of people who had made the presentations. This team was rather small and included the NCWBLP Director, the Head of Business Development and two Development Tutors. Actually, the group that gave presentations during the last year within the United Kingdom consisted of only three persons as one Development Tutor concentrated on conducting presentations to potential institutional partners in Europe. Three presentations were made during the last twelve months to European educational institutions but no concrete results have been achieved yet. An estimate on the number of students who are likely to be recruited from these institutions is not currently possible to be made as it usually takes more than a year an institution to finalise and confirm a partnership. More presentations are scheduled for the future to institutions, associations and corporations with partnership potential as this is evaluated from the long list of enquiries the Middlesex University European Office receives on an on-going basis.

The other Development Tutor has been mainly dealing with organisations related to seafaring and ancillary activities. These organisations are professional bodies such as the Nautical Institute, International Institute of Marine Surveyors or charities such as the Marine Society with the main objective the welfare of seafarers within which they support and organise education for seafarers. NCWBLP's first step was to make presentations to a rather small group (2-3 persons) of decision-makers. Promotional materials for WBL programmes were left with them for distribution to the members of the associations.

NCWBLP has already established its identity and competence with these organisations and the benefits have been very significant as they variously put information on the WBL programmes on their web site ([www.marine-society.org.uk/mdx](http://www.marine-society.org.uk/mdx)), circulate NCWBLP's fliers to interested parties or have their educational programmes accredited with Middlesex University. In January 2001 Middlesex University signed an agreement with the International Institute of Marine Surveyors, which enabled holders of their Diploma to progress directly to Middlesex's Masters programme. NCWBLP developed a customised programme for students to complete their studies (BA/MA level) while continuing their normal duties by using text-based distance learning material with support by e-mail, fax, phone and face-to-face tutorials when applicable.



The student recruitment results from approaching the above three professional bodies have been very encouraging so far for the NCWBLP. Although it usually takes at least three months for a presentation to produce results, a remarkable number of 58 students have been admitted to WBL programmes during the last year. More professional bodies will be targeted the following months based on the Development Tutor's personal contacts developed outside the university.

Apart from the presentations to the above professional bodies, the WBL programmes were also presented to seventeen organisations in the UK during the last twelve months. The huge majority of them (16) operate within the public sector of the economy. The breakdown per industry provided an indication of the main target, which was the education segment with six organisations. Governmental organisations were regularly approached (four organisations) as well. Most of the organisations had first approached the NCWBLP individually to be informed about accreditation of their own courses and competency frameworks. A number of presentations were also arranged following enquiries generated by the web site and contacts from past students. PowerPoint software was utilized to develop transparencies and slides, which was the key material used for the presentations. In all cases, senior personnel (usually 3-5 persons) of a diversified capacity (managing directors, training managers, head teachers etc) attended the presentations.

The impact of these presentations on the recruitment levels was significant with 60 students admitted to WBL programmes from six organisations. It is likely that recruitment can be achieved from another four organisations in the future, although the relationship between presentations and recruitment has been a very difficult one to determine. According to the NCWBLP Director, presentations contributed about two thirds (or approximately 120) of the new BA/MA students registered for WBL courses in the year 2000-01. The remaining part or about 60 students has joined as a result of general publicity (internet, references etc).

Marketing the WBL programmes in the UK is almost exclusively associated with the extension of the partnership approach to target selected organisations such as small and medium enterprises, local authorities, adult educational colleges etc. Two of the most effective to date partnerships have been those with Bovis UK and Harlow College of Further Education that not only accredited individual employees' prior work based learning, but also

reinforced and extended learning the partner organisation had previously provided. In both cases the student and the employer had a full role in the development and approval of the programmes that were customised to meet both the needs of the individual employees-students and the strategic objectives of the organisations. Especially in the Harlow College case, the partnership was developed a step further as it enabled the College to co-deliver the programmes to individuals and companies in its own catchment area, thus increasing student numbers for both the college and the University. Partnerships with educational providers have been very successfully developed in Cyprus and Hong Kong as well.

Developmental work for the introduction of WBL programmes in both countries commenced simultaneously (1996) and the key feature of the successful marketing of the WBL programmes is the partnership with the management centre of a government agency in Cyprus and with the Hong Kong University in Hong Kong. The former offers a course leading to Postgraduate Diploma (awarded by University of Surrey), which was used as a basis for students to pursue MA in WBL by undertaking only the last two WBL modules. The latter (through SPACE which stands for School of Professional and Continuing Education) has collaborated with Middlesex University to offer part-time WBL Bachelor's degree programmes with honours in three areas: Recreation and Sports Management since September 2000, Nursing and Education since September 2001. Students who are holders of certain diplomas or certificates are exempted a predetermined number of credits. The common characteristics of marketing WBL in Cyprus and Hong Kong are:

- Recruitment was heavily relied on individuals in the early stage.
- Accreditation of courses offered by other educational providers resolved the issue of providing subject-based taught knowledge and enabled recruitment to be built through collaborations.
- Customisation of WBL programmes through delivery of only two modules: research methodologies and work based project.
- Establishment of the WBL philosophy that enabled recruitment of doctorate candidates to be built on individual basis.

The current student numbers are in the range of about 120 students (the majority of them comes through the collaborations) for each country but the prospects are exceptionally

promising as the collaborations provide a guaranteed clientele basis. Undoubtedly, the Greek Centre should seriously consider this partnership approach, as it appears to have very high student recruitment potential.

## 5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING THE PROGRAMMES

Much of the fortunes for the growth of the work based learning depend on the support from the State and the companies within their network. We mentioned previously (2.4) that much of the credit for the emergence and development of the WBL concept in the UK should go to the government that stressed the role of the WBL in economic development and funded various work based learning initiatives (Portwood and Costley, 2000). This development reflected the making of lifelong learning as a strategic objective and the perception of the workplace as a site of learning. The obvious question is: Is the Greek market well prepared to perceive WBL the same way as in the case of the British market?

In Greece, the national debate on lifelong learning in the framework of the common effort of the EU governments commenced in March 2001. The basis of the debate is the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning of the European Commission with key messages such as: new basic skills for all, more investments in HR, innovation in teaching and learning etc. No national policy on Lifelong Learning for Greece is expected to be formulated before the end of 2002. Meanwhile, the government applies vocational training as a way to upgrade professional competencies and enhance the employability of the workforce, which will then –hopefully– decrease the high unemployment rates. Recent developments such as the work based learning concept is completely “unheard” of and to make things worse, the local official body (Dikatsa) does not recognise any academic qualifications (WBL awards inclusive) obtained from foreign universities through courses conducted in Greece. Consequently, work based learning in Greece will have to face lack of government recognition with an obvious impact on its credibility.

Companies can play a major role in building the WBL credibility through partnerships with the university, which have been successful in the UK. According to Doncaster and Garnett (2000) key features of the partnership with Bovis were the accreditation of the company’s Management Development Programme and Competencies and the company’s involvement in the design of a customised programme and the development of a partnership that included

four parties: employer, individual participants, a high level learning provider and the university. The authors identified accreditation of internal training courses, programme customisation and employer's heavy involvement (in the form of joint programme delivery) as the central features for the successful partnership with Harlow College.

The partnership concept has been previously applied by the GCWBLP in the case of the Interamerican insurance group. The partnership was solely based on accreditation of employees' prior work based learning, while the company's training needs were taken into account with the inclusion of two jointly designed seminars for all the undergraduate students. There was no accreditation of internal training courses and no programme customisation as all the WBLS modules were delivered. The organisation's involvement was only for the design of the training sessions and the final three undergraduate projects that were of the same nature for all the participants. The Interamerican's case, the feedback received from companies which currently (previously) sponsor (have sponsored) WBL studies (i.e. HBC, Panafon-Vodafone), the forthcoming collaboration with Nationale Nederlanden and the feedback received from the corporate perception survey (banking and insurance companies) seem to establish a partnership concept that exclusively relies upon the employee's prior learning accreditation only. The company "buys" (intends to buy) the programme as delivered without any customisation but with –possible- incorporation of training sessions to meet specific training needs. This concept defines a new marketing model ("the GCWBLP model") that is rather different from the presented NCWBLP model, although both enable the participating organisations to achieve their objectives: the upgrading of their intellectual capitals. At the same time WBL can contribute to organisational learning and to effective knowledge management (that leads to effective decision making) through the work based project and the advancement of the project capabilities of the employees.

Our experience from the marketing efforts made over the last five years and the above research findings verify that there is limited room for the success possibility of the NCWBLP model within the Greek market. This is because the fundamentals of the external environments (Government, perceptions by corporations etc) in the British market are not that similar to those of the Greek market, as the latter seems not to value work based learning the way it is valued in the UK. The importance placed upon lifelong learning by government and support of employers and professional bodies had produced a conducive environment in

United Kingdom which reinforced the Middlesex University initiative that finally succeeded in elevating the work based learning from the initial perception of a mode of learning to a field of study, thus remarkably enhancing its credibility and marketability potential. As mentioned above, the situation in Greece is unfortunately completely different.

In the UK and in the age of the “corporate university” and “knowledge driven economy”, universities do enjoy extended roles related to the provision of continuous professional development. Organisations perceive partnerships with universities for work based programmes as agreements that highly improve their intellectual capital. This perception has significantly contributed (and still contributes) to the success of the NCWBLP’s business development efforts, but it does not apparently apply to the Greek market. These different perceptions in the Greek and British markets reflect the fundamental perception differences on the work based learning concept in the two countries. Work based learning is perceived as both a field as well as mode of study in the UK, but in Greece (due to the lack of the above-mentioned conducive conditions which apply in the case of the UK) is widely considered only as a mode of study. The latter perception is further reinforced by the unwillingness of the employers to actively participate, thus preventing the programmes from working as really work based ones.

Despite the perception differences, WBL has overall achieved remarkable commercial success in Greece with student numbers comparable (taking into consideration the market sizes) to those of the UK for the last three years. This means that commercial success is not linked to specific programme perception by the target audience but it is related to the programme positioning and its capacity to satisfy certain needs of this audience. From this point of view, GCWBLP should focus its efforts to apply the most suitable approach to achieve further success for the programmes rather than to attempt to “educate” and convince the target audience about the WBL right perceptions. This suitable approach should be based on both the individual student and corporate partnership (as per the model analysed above) platforms the main characteristics of which have been researched in this chapter. The identified GCWBLP approach will play a highly significant role in the future, as it provides the road map to the strategic development of the Centre.

This chapter has evaluated the research findings from the surveys conducted on the potential student profile, past graduates' satisfaction, corporate perception of the work based learning concept and experience from marketing the programmes in the UK. Key marketing issues that have been uncovered include:

- The potential student profile characteristics (with profession to be the most important) that will enable the marketing to target effectively the individual student.
- The strong business development potential in marketing the programmes to various groups of professionals aiming to add postgraduate endorsement and credibility to their profiles and to educational providers thus solving the problem of providing subject-based knowledge and capitalising on their clientele basis.
- The partnership model that will provide guidelines for corporate partnership developments within the banking and insurance sectors.

The collected information and recommended actions to be taken constitute material of high value that GCWBLP has to take into serious consideration before formulating its marketing strategy. However, this material is related to the external marketing factors. Internal marketing factors do play a key role in the marketing success of a product as well. In the GCWBLP case, there is no structured business development unit but the annual business development plan is proposed by myself (Advisor) and approved by the Academic Director. The Commercial Director (Plaisio plc) is aware of the annual plans but his involvement in their development has been rather limited. Execution of the business plans is a joint responsibility of all the GCWBLP staff that is fully aware of the programme characteristics and benefits and of the most suitable ways to communicate them after a long-term exposure in these areas. The Greek Centre team –working together during the last three years- seems to be performing its marketing responsibilities satisfactorily for the time being, but in the near future (2-3 years) the appointment of a sales oriented person might be necessary to aggressively pursue plans (e.g. approach professional bodies), should these plans deliver solid results in the immediate future. A possible further involvement by the Commercial Director would be able to increase opportunities to establish partnerships due to his large network of senior business contacts. However, expectations should not be that high taking into consideration the above-analysed WBL corporate perception.

The presented internal issues are directly related to the marketing of the programmes but other aspects (e.g. academic, administration) are also involved in the successful business development. The academic part is taken care of by a well-trained team of qualified Advisors, while the administration part by an experienced administrator. The above-analysed partnership model creates no high requirements for staff skills and capabilities comparing to those required at the NCWBLP where high quality skills in working with companies and very good administration capabilities have been critical for the success of various partnerships.

To summarise, the existing GCWBLP structure is adequate for the coming 1-2 years and is well-placed to effectively support the implementation of its marketing plan that should take into consideration the internal human resources and should rely upon cost effective marketing tools (which will be analysed in Chapter 7). However, to form the marketing plan, detailed information on the market conditions, competitors' profile etc is required on top of the presented research results. Chapter 6 overviews the local market conditions for higher education targeted at professionals, evaluates the current marketing literature (GCWBLP's and competitors') and past advertising and public relations activities of the Greek Centre and attempts to explore niche opportunities for business development purposes.

# 6

## **THE MARKET DATA AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES**

The formulation of the GCWBLP's mission and identification of its strategic choice (previously completed in 3.2.1 and 3.2.4) are very crucial for the long term planning. The marketplace is equally critical and the Centre needs to thoroughly understand the market before developing its marketing strategy. This chapter intends to provide a market overview for higher education programmes targeted at professionals, a market segmentation and targeting from GCWBLP's point of view, an assessment of marketing literature materials for key market players and finally an evaluation of the Centre's previous marketing activities and future niche opportunities.

### 6.1 MARKET OVERVIEW AND MARKET SIZE

GCWBLP serves a specific target group by offering work based learning studies that accredit prior experiential knowledge. However, it is understood that potential WBL students consider various alternative taught programmes apart from our courses, before they take their final decision about the programmes to apply for. From this point of view, GCWBLP competes with other institutions for students and it should be aware of important competitive information such as institutions' profiles, programmes, tuition fees etc. Our analysis will focus on the institutions offering postgraduate studies only, a segment that accounts for about 92% of our total perspective student population (Potential work based learning student profile survey, 5.1) and for 88% of our new students for the academic year 2001-02.



According to the Postgraduate Studies Guide (2001), there are approximately 400 postgraduate programmes offered today in Greece by public universities, technological educational institutions and private colleges, which are targeted at both young graduates and experienced professionals. The majority of these MA/MSc courses (230 or 57%) are provided (usually at no or very low cost) by public universities inclusive of the Open University (distance learning mode), while the public technological educational institutions (T.E.I.) offer today approximately 40 (10% of the total) and the private colleges another 130 (or 33%) postgraduate courses. Figure 10 shows a percentage distribution of the postgraduate programmes by institutions of various types.

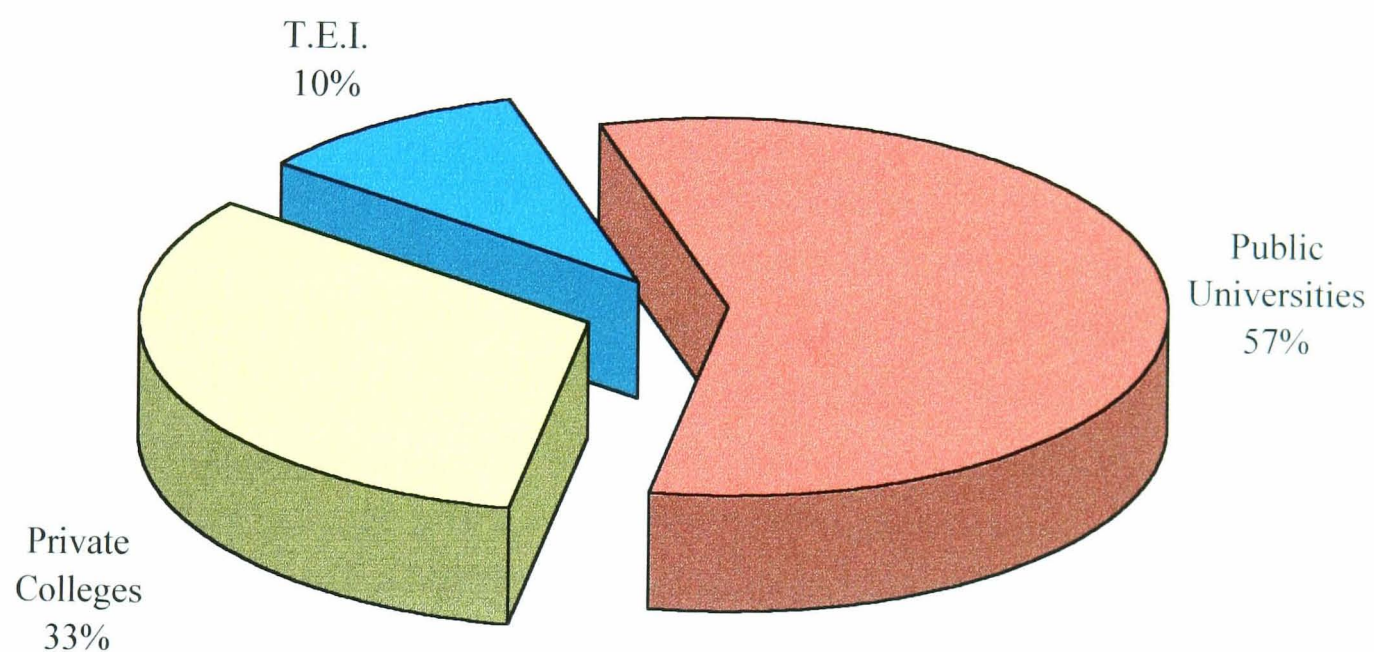


Figure 10 Percentage distribution of MA/MSc programmes by nature of institution

Our intention was to obtain an indication of the current market size in terms of student population by evaluating the students' strength of all the public and private institutions that offer Master's programmes targeted only at executives. These executives are professionals with substantial experience in their own field who could consider WBL studies as an alternative way to obtain a Master's degree and are therefore potential customers to the GCWBLP. All the technological institutions, public universities and private colleges that offer postgraduate programmes only for inexperienced students were not mentioned in our analysis.

A short profile was prepared for every institution inclusive of key data, courses offered, tuition fees (if available) and a student number estimate. This student (experienced professionals) estimate is based on discussions with various schools' employees (about class sizes, entry requirements in terms of experience etc) after I made an enquiry as a potential student for their postgraduate courses. Source of information was mainly institutions' brochures and their web sites and press releases. Extensive reference was provided for a few institutions (e.g. Alec, Open University etc) that constitute a strong competitor to the GCWBLP. The list presented below classifies in alphabetical order the institutions in three categories: private colleges, public universities and distance learning higher education institutions.

### 6.1.1 PRIVATE COLLEGES

#### **I. Athens Graduate School of Management (AGSM)**

The long established Athens School of Management was recently renamed Athens Graduate School of Management that offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in its two campuses (Athens and Thessaloniki) in collaboration with the Nottingham Trent University. The Master's programmes on offer include the MBA (full-time, part-time and executive all designed for professionals with substantial managerial experience) and three MSc courses. AGSM also offers courses for professionals leading to postgraduate diploma in marketing communications and in public relations in association with the City College of London. It is also active in providing corporate training programmes such as the Executive Seminar Series and the Sector Specific Professional Programmes. The total number of executives enrolled at postgraduate level is anticipated to be about 40 students, while the total cost for an MBA course is about € 9,500, payable in six instalments.

#### **II. Athens Laboratory of Business Administration (ALBA)**

ALBA is an educational non-profit association of 39 Greek corporations, which was founded in 1992. It operates under the auspices of the Federation of Greek Industries, the Hellenic Management Association and the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It offers two MBA courses; the MBA-Certificate and the Professional MBA-Certificate tailored to the needs of young professionals with 3-5 years of experience and middle managers of various ages sponsored by their companies. In January 2000, a specialised MSc in Business Studies for Law Practitioners was introduced. Beyond these courses, ALBA is also active in executive

development programmes (open enrolment, in-house, customised seminars etc). applied research and international projects, public events (conferences, roundtable discussions etc) and academic research.

The total number of alumni (1993-2001) from the above three courses is 555, with 352 to have come from the full-time MBA course. It is understood that the majority of the alumni are young university graduates from various disciplines (economics, engineering, business administration, political science etc) with little or no professional experience. The number of experienced professionals graduated during the last nine years was in the range of 150, but the current annual intake should be about 40 students for all the courses. A tuition fee indication for one year full-time course is € 14,000 (payable in five instalments), which includes books and teaching materials.

### **III. Business Centre of Athens (BCA)**

BCA was founded in 1971 and it was the first institution in Greece that offered studies in Marketing and Shipping. Today, it is one of the major private educational institutions in Greece and offers postgraduate programmes on full-time, part-time and distance learning basis with the exclusive collaboration of London Guildhall University (two MSc and two MA courses) and University of Huddersfield (four MBA programmes). Although the MBA courses are mainly targeted to professionals, the working experience requirement is a minimum of two years relevant work experience.

According to the BCA web site, at least 12,000 students have graduated over the last 30 years with both postgraduate and undergraduate degrees. The current enrolment level is estimated at approximately 800 students attending all the courses with about 150 students enrolled in the postgraduate programmes. Taking into consideration the admission criteria on working experience, it is expected that about 60 students must have extensive professional learning. The full-time tuition fees for an MA programme are € 8,950 cash (or € 9,860 in four instalments).

### **IV. Centre of European Management Studies (CeMS)**

CeMS is an educational organisation that specialises in training for professionals and in management development. The most essential principle of this institution is “credibility and

dissemination of advanced academic knowledge and useful capabilities for sustainable development and employability”. In accordance with this principle, CeMS co-operates with the University of Surrey (Surrey European Management School – SeMS) and offers an MBA and three MSc programmes. As no certain number of working experience is required for admission, it is believed that the working professionals attending postgraduate courses should not exceed the level of 20.

#### **V. City Liberal Studies (CITY)**

CITY was founded in Thessaloniki in 1989 and recognised as “an affiliated college” of the University of Sheffield in 1997. Today, CITY consists of four academic departments offering in total 6 undergraduate and 8 postgraduate degrees. Most of the latter are targeted at young graduates, with the exception of the MBA Executive (available with four specialisations) designed for experienced executives. The course was recently introduced and must have attracted approximately 20 executives.

#### **VI. European University (EU)**

Since its founding 25 years ago, European University has grown into a global network of 13 campuses located in 8 different European countries and educational partnerships with universities in the USA, Asia and the rest of the world. European University is the largest pan-european network of business schools offering Bachelor, Master, Doctorate and Corporate Development programmes at its campuses in Greece, Germany, France, Holland, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland where the international headquarters is located (Montreux). European University opened its Athens campus in 1989 and currently offers 9 Bachelor’s and 16 Master’s programmes inclusive of four MBA courses. The postgraduate programmes are basically designed for graduates and therefore the total number of professionals with working experience attending them should be not more than 15.

#### **VII. Hellenic Management Association (EEDE)**

It was founded in 1962 as a non-profit society with the purpose to develop and promote the principles, methods and practice of contemporary management. Today, EEDE has 3,936 members (367 of which are companies and organisations), operates seven institutes (such as marketing, financial management etc), employs 70 permanent staff in the central offices and five regional branches and collaborates with approximately 535 trainers. On top of the

training programmes, certified training and open seminars, EEDE offers two MBA courses in co-operation with Henley Management College, MBA course created by EEDE and Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing in co-operation with the Chartered Institute of Marketing. The Henley MBA programmes (2-3 years duration) are targeted at graduates with at least two years working experience and cost about € 15,000, while the EEDE MBA (13 months duration) costs only € 5,000 for members or € 5,140 for non-members. It is estimated that the overall number of mature students with substantial working experience attending all the postgraduate courses should be approximately 50 students.

### **VIII. ICBS Business School**

It was established in 1977 in Thessaloniki in co-operation with the following three British Institutes: CAM Education Foundation, Institute of Marketing and Association of British Executives. In 1997 the ICBS Athens Business School began its operations and with effect from the same year all the ICBS programmes have been delivered in association with Kingston University. ICBS is a major player in the business education and they claim that “1 in 4 students who pursues an MBA award in Greece today in both public and private institutes has chosen ICBS”. The postgraduate programmes are mainly MBAs with nine specialisations (and one MA in Business Management), which are conducted in Greek language on part-time basis. It is estimated that out of the 1,000 students currently registered for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, 200 should be on MA courses and 50 of them must have substantial working experience, which is basic requirement for the MBA courses. The tuition fee is close to € 10,000 for the two-year part-time course.

### **IX. ICON International Training**

Icon International Training provides academic and professional managerial learning and development programmes since 1989. In association with the University of Leicester and University of Surrey (Surrey European Management School) Icon offers in Greece and Cyprus MBA (eight specialisations) and MSc courses in five different disciplines, which mainly attract young graduates. According to their web site 36% of the students are above 30 years of age and 80% of the students hold a Bachelor's degree. The vast majority of the mature experienced students should be attending MBA courses and a rough estimate of their number should be about 25.

## **X. Independent Science and Technology Studies (IST)**

IST Studies was founded in 1989. A master franchise agreement was signed with the University of Hertfordshire in 1992 and four years later two postgraduate programmes (MSc in Computer Science and MBA) were launched. In 1999, IST introduced the MA in Management targeted at business executives without first degree but extensive professional experience. In 1997, the institution was certified by the internationally recognised standard ISO 9001 for the “design and implementation of university level courses”. The IST web site claims that there are currently 50 students on Master’s schemes, but the number of them with remarkable working experience should be not more than 15.

## **XI. Institution d’ Etudes Francophones (IdEF)**

IdEF was established in 1995 and is part of the educational group ORION-IdEF. It offers both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in collaboration with the public French University Paris-Nord 13. The special programme in banking and insurance studies is targeted at professionals with extensive experience in these fields who can complete a four-year bachelor’s degree (maitrise) in one year only as their experience is recognised as “three years of study”. IdEF also offers postgraduate programmes in banking, finance and risk management for young graduates and experienced professionals. Classes are conducted in French or English and last 12 to 21 months. A rather small number (about 15) of working professionals attends the postgraduate courses.

## **XII. Mediterranean College-ECS**

It has been offering university level studies in Greece since 1977. It now offers programmes at all levels (HND, BA and MA) in collaboration with the University of Wales-Bangor, University of York and University of Northumbria at Newcastle. An MBA course with four specialisations is offered via distance learning in collaboration with the Edinburgh Business School of Heriot-Watt University. This is the only course that is addressed “to managers and professionals wishing to take advantage of the flexibility offered by distance learning”. The tuition fee for this programme is approximately € 12,000 (for 2-4 years of study) and the number of students is estimated to be around 25. The college is ISO 9002 certified and it currently operates through five campuses out of which four are located in Athens.



### **XIII. New York College (NYC)**

NYC has been operating since 1989 in co-operation with the State University of New York, the largest state university of the United States. NYC offers Master's degrees (inclusive of an MBA with four specialisations) in 11 areas in collaboration with University of Sunderland, E.S.C.E.M. (Ecole Supérieure de Commerce et de Management in France), University of Louisville in Kentucky and University of New Haven in Connecticut. It expanded its operations to Prague (Czech Republic) in 1998 and to Thessaloniki in 2001. The postgraduate programmes are targeted to both young graduates and business executives with at least 10 years experience if they lack an undergraduate degree. It is estimated that the number of students attending MA programmes is approximately 150 with about 80 of them to have significant working experience (i.e. at least three years). The tuition fees for the M.B.A. course from University of Louisville and E.S.C.E.M. are in the range of € 11,000 and € 9,000 respectively.

### **XIV. North College**

It is one of the first higher education institutions in Greece, as it was established in Thessaloniki in 1975. The University of Abertay Dundee has validated four MBA and one MSc programmes offered by North College, out of which two (targeted at working professionals with minimum three years working experience) were validated in February 2002. The programmes are offered with the lowest tuition fee in the market (about € 4,200 for a 12-month MBA course). The number of professionals attending should be about 20 with very good growth prospects for their programmes mainly due to low tuition fees.

### **XV. University of Indianapolis Athens (UIA)**

It is an international branch of the University of Indianapolis (founded in 1902 in Indiana, USA) which operates as a non-profit laboratory of liberal studies. UIA offers an executive MBA course and another 5 postgraduate programmes mainly targeted at young graduates without significant experience and involve a four-week session at the main campus in the USA. The executive MBA attracts working professionals, as one of the admission criteria is five years executive managerial experience. Tuition fees for the postgraduate programmes range from € 8,500 (MA in Applied Sociology) to € 10,000 (Executive MBA). It is expected that the number of working professionals enrolled into all the postgraduate programmes is not more than 30.

## **XVI. University of La Verne Athens (ULV)**

ULV was established in 1975 as an overseas branch campus of the University of La Verne, founded in 1891 in California. It offers high quality American educational undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to approximately 850 students from 35 different countries. Two out of the four main Master's programmes require working experience but another three MBA courses do attract experienced professionals as well. The above programmes are conducted on two-year full-time basis with approximate cost of € 5,000 per year. The overall number of experienced professionals who are admitted to the postgraduate programmes is estimated to be around 60 students.

## **XVII. Others**

On top of the above 16 colleges, the following five institutions also offer postgraduate studies that attract a limited number (five to ten at the most each) of executives with significant experience:

- Centre Francophone d' Etudes Superieures (C.F.E.S.): Established in 1978, offers 13 postgraduate courses with most of them to be conducted in French. Three programmes may attract professionals.
- Centre for Management and Administration (C.M.A.): Established in 1978, offers one MBA programme in association with the University of Glamorgan.
- British Hellenic College (B.H.C.): Founded in 1989, offers MBA courses (two specialisations) in collaboration with University of Wales.
- Ellanion: It offers an MBA and an MSc in association with the University of Portsmouth.
- European Studies of Arts and Sciences (E.S.A.S.): In its two campuses (Athens, Thessaloniki) offers an MBA (three specialisations) and two MA courses in co-operation with the University of Lincolnshire and Humbershire.

It is believed that only the above-presented twenty one institutions out of all the private colleges attract executives with working experience. However, this group of professionals (who are also potential WBL students) may opt for a distance learning or for a taught programme provided by a public university. The profile of the main players in these categories is presented in the following segment.



## 6.1.2 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Public universities offer more than 200 postgraduate courses, but only the following two provide programmes designed for both young graduates and working professionals.

### **I. Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB)**

It was founded in 1920 and became the first public university in Greece that offered a postgraduate degree comparable to the Anglo-Saxon standards in 1978. Today it offers 15 postgraduate courses with 5 of them to exclusively target at executives (although young well-qualified graduates may be enrolled as well). All the awards are fully recognised by Dikatsa, thus making AUEB the most successful public higher education institution in the country in terms of student admission numbers. The total intake (as indicated in the University's brochures) of working professionals is about 180 students enrolled in the MBA for executives and four MSc programmes. Tuition fees range from € 7,000 (24 months) for the MBA to € 8,500 (18 months) for the MSc in Decision Sciences.

### **II. University of Piraeus (UNIP)**

It was established in 1938 under the title "School of Industrial Studies" and received its current name and University status in 1989. Today, two (out of its seven) departments offer seven postgraduate programmes with two of them targeted at executives: MSc in Financial Analysis and MBA with four specialisations. Total number of professionals attending is about 50 persons with tuition fees € 7,630 (24 months).

## 6.1.3 DISTANCE LEARNING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The most successful entry in the higher education market was that of the distance learning (DL) programmes offered by the public Hellenic Open University, thus making distance learning the biggest segment in the market of higher education at postgraduate level. Today, there are two DL institutions in Greece, although others may offer DL courses on top of the above-presented taught courses.

### **I. Hellenic Open University (HOU)**

It was established as a public legal entity in 1992 following the huge success of the Open University in the UK and other European countries in the late 1980s. After six years of

preparations two pilot programmes were launched in 1998 with the first group of postgraduate students graduating in 1999. Today, HOU offers 16 postgraduate programmes with 11 of them leading to MA/MSc awards and the remaining leading to postgraduate certificates.

Every student at Master's level must successfully complete four modules plus a final project. The student receives at home the educational material and other useful information in various forms (books, video, e-mail etc) and regularly communicates with his/her personal adviser for guidance on the essay(s) that need(s) to be submitted. He/she should also participate in at least five group meetings (four-hour seminars) during a ten-month period of study, which is the necessary period for the completion of a module. There are currently six postgraduate courses exclusively targeted at working professionals with minimum three years of experience (1030 students) and another five aimed at both young graduates and executives. It is estimated that the latter are attended by approximately 230 students with at least three years of working experience in their professional field. It should be noted that the selection of students is based on lucky draw that is conducted electronically, if the number of applications exceeds the maximum enrolment number. An average MA course takes approximately 30 months for completion and the total cost is only € 2,650.

## **II. Applied Learning Evaluation Centre (ALEC)**

It was introduced in the Greek market in June 2001 with a number of newspaper insertions. The Centre (private organisation) offers the Applied Learning Evaluation Programme (ALEP) a totally non-residential distance learning post-secondary degree programme based on adult learning theory and practice and designed for mature candidates who desire to earn university qualifications, at a distance, and in their own way. The programme was approved for use in Canada in early 1996 and by the fall of 1996 was being utilised in more than 25 countries inclusive of the United Kingdom, United States of America, France, Italy, Switzerland etc. Postgraduate programmes are available in over 40 disciplines. Specifically, the College of Arts and Sciences offers 9 courses, the School of Business Administration offers MBA with 16 specialisations and the College of Education has 8 courses on offer. According to their web site "the Centre co-operates with several highly respected and internationally recognised institutions of higher learning both in the United States and in the European Union" but no specific university names are mentioned.

The common characteristic of WBL and ALEP is that both require the candidate to complete an assessment portfolio that determines the extent of credit allowed for prior experiential learning. ALEC follows the Washington based American Council of Education guidelines that classify the life experiences in the following categories: employment, seminars, travel, homemaking, volunteer work, recreational activities and hobbies and self-study. For candidates who do not possess a great deal of prior experience (those who pursue a Bachelor's degree), a learning contract (similar to that used by the WBL studies) is used to set a plan of knowledge-based study, goals the candidate wishes to achieve and action to be taken. The Master's degree programme requires 33 credits and is divided into three tiers: Tier I (12 credits) requires the completion of core courses, Tier II (15 credits) involves individualised study and Tier III comprises of a 6-credit thesis (30,000 to 50,000 words) that requires the candidate to provide evidence of comprehensive knowledge at least equal to that of student's completing the same degree through a residential study programme.

Advising to the degree candidates is provided by Academic Advisors based at the various ALEC International Training Centres. The largest portion of candidates for this programme consists of people who are 35 to 45 years of age, have extensive working experience and knowledge and lack degrees and time to attend a campus based traditional education course. A postgraduate degree takes no less than three years to be completed but the tuition fee is flat at € 9,200 regardless of the completion time. The programmes were launched in Greece with an introductory offer (free laptop computer with all Master's and PhD programmes), but it is understood that their success has been moderate and the total number of students registered for postgraduate courses is estimated to be not more than 30.

Based on the above analysis, the total number of working professionals attending a distance learning postgraduate course should be approximately 1290. Table 8 shows a summary of all the above-presented institutions inclusive of the Greek Centre for WBL studies. For comparison purposes the MBA fees were listed as almost all the institutions offer MBA courses.

The GCWBLP student number refers only to the registered Master's students (91) for the year 2001-02 (i.e. does not include 44 and 5 students registered for Bachelor's and Doctorate programmes respectively). The tuition fees is the cost related to 80 RAL credits awarded from

Institute's Name	Est. in	Courses offered	University Co-operations	Tuition Fees (€) / duration (m)	No. of students
AGSM	N.A.	MBA, 3 MSc	Nottingham Trent	9,500 / 26	40
ALBA	1992	2 MBA, 1 MSc	-----	14,000 / 12	40
BCA	1971	4 MBA, 2 MSc, 2 MA	Huddersfield, London Guildhall	8,950 / 12	60
CeMS	N.A.	MBA, 3 MSc	Surrey	N.A.	20
CITY	1989	MBA (4 sp)	Sheffield	N.A.	20
EU	1989	4 MBA	European	N.A.	15
EEDE	1962	3 MBA, PgDip	Henley Mgt College	5,140 / 13 15,000 / 24	50
ICBS	1977	MBA (9 sp), 1 MA	Kingston	10,000 / 24	50
ICON	1989	MBA (8 sp), 5 MSc	Leicester, Surrey	N.A.	25
IST	1989	MBA, MSc, MA	Hertfordshire	N.A.	15
IDEF	1995	2 MA	Paris-Nord 13	N.A.	15
MED-ECS	1977	MBA (4 sp)	Heriot-Watt EBS	12,000 / 12-24	25
NYC	1989	2 MBA (5 sp), 2 MSc	State U. of N.Y. Sunderland, Louis-ville, ESCEM	11,000 / 12 9,000 / 12	80
NORTH	1975	4 MBA, 1 MSc	Abertay Dundee	4,200 / 12.	20
UIA	N.A.	MBA, 5 MA	Indianapolis	10,000 / 12-24	30
ULV	1975	4 MBA, MA	La Verne	10,000 / 24	60
CFES	1978	3 MA	-----	N.A.	10
CMA	1978	MBA	Glamorgan	N.A.	10
BHC	1989	MBA (2 sp)	Wales	N.A.	5
ELLANION	N.A.	MBA, MSc	Portsmouth	N.A.	5
ESAS	N.A.	MBA (3 sp), 2 MA	Linconshire and Humbershide	N.A.	5
<b>Total Private Colleges</b>					<b>600</b>
AUEB	1920	MBA, MSc (6 sp)	-----	7,000 / 24.	180
UNIPi	1938	MBA (4 sp), MSc	-----	7,630 / 24.	50
<b>Total Public Universities</b>					<b>230</b>
HOU	1998	11 MA	-----	2,650 / 30	1260
ALEC	2001	MBA (16 sp), 12 MA, 5 MSc	-----	9,200 / 36.	30
<b>Total Distance Learning</b>					<b>1290</b>
GCWBLP	1997	WBL	Middlesex	6,500 / 12	<b>90</b>
<b>G R A N D T O T A L</b>					<b>2210</b>

Table 8 Higher education institutions offering MA/MSc programmes for experienced professionals

previous experiential learning (£ 4,200, with exchange rate 1 £ = 1.55 €). HOU dominates the market according to Table 8 with 58% (out of 59% for the total distance learning segment) of the total student numbers followed by AUEB with about 8%. The section of private colleges seems to be extremely competitive with 21 players competing for about 600 students or 27% of the market. The taught courses offered by public universities have achieved a good share of approximately 10% with only two institutions. The percentage shares of the four different segments presented in Table 8 were drawn as a chart (Figure 11) below.

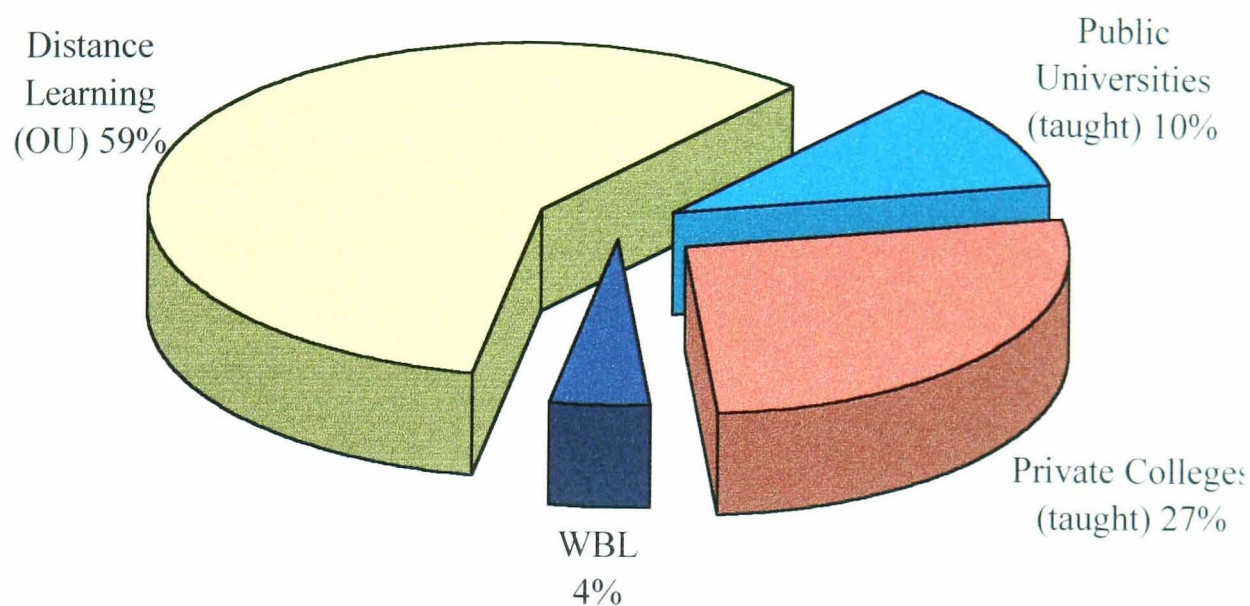


Figure 11 Percentage distribution of experienced professionals attending postgraduate programmes by mode of delivery

Almost three out of five working professionals prefer the distance learning mode of delivery and one out of ten goes for a taught course offered by a public university. Overall, almost 7 out of 10 professionals (68%) attend a course offered by a public university either on taught or a distance learning basis. WBL currently enjoys about 4% of the market share, which makes the GCWBLP the third largest player behind the HOU and AUEB and ahead of long established institutes such as BCA, ULV and NYC.

Taking into consideration the data of the Table 8, we have managed to establish a very good indication for the size of the whole market and its segments. The number of working professionals attending a postgraduate course during the current academic year - who were also potential WBL students - was estimated to be about 2,200 students. This estimate was

absolutely in line with a newspaper (K.Eleftherotypia, November 4, 2001) article, which indicated that the market size must be “above 2000 students”.

After answering the question: “How large is the current market?” we had to deal with another one that was related to forecasting: “What is the likely future size of the market?” One way to answer this question was to apply trend extrapolation i.e. to assume that the past growth rates were to continue in the future. However, the recent (1998) entry of HOU influenced heavily the demand by establishing a brand new segment (DL) that almost doubled the 1998 market size. The entry impact of HOU on the market size has been –more or less- settled by now and therefore an approximate forecast for the future market size could be made based on the assumption that the uncontrollable factors (e.g. change of regulations, new programmes, tuition fees, promotion by other institutions etc) would not significantly influence the current market fundamentals. Taking into account all the above, we believe that the market of working professionals undertaking postgraduate programmes will be growing by at least 10% per annum for the years to come.

We have so far analysed the marketplace by determining the current and future size of the available market for the WBL programmes. We need now to identify the main groups making up the market in order to choose the best target group to serve. The following section deals with this task, which is defined as market segmentation and targeting.

## 6.2 MARKET SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), market is the set of all people who have an actual or potential interest in a product or service and the resources to acquire it. If we look at the market closely, we will realise that it is heterogeneous. This means that it is made up of different types of consumers or market segments. Market segmentation analysis is usually followed by market targeting where one or more segments is / are selected to be served. Alternatively, an institution may decide to target all these segments (mass marketing), instead of one / or a few of them. The section below evaluates the two alternative marketing approaches for the GCWBLP.

A number of variables (or often a combination of them) is usually applied to segment the market, with the most common ones to be geography, age, sex, income, lifestyle and



behaviour. We attempted to apply the segmentation approach using different variables for the market of professionals seeking graduate qualifications in Greece. The first effort was to geographically segment the market based on the concept that customers' needs and preferences may be different from one area to another. This concept has been applied by the HOU very successfully by distant delivery of 11 postgraduate programmes. In the case of GCWBLP the geographical distribution of graduates reveals that they have come from 13 different areas with only 53% of them coming from Athens. In our case, we did not identify any special need by the students-to-be living in areas outside Athens, but the only preference they expressed was to have the programmes delivered at their own city. This has been successfully addressed so far, as the 41% of the graduates completed their studies without travelling to Athens but through attending classes in Heraklion, Larissa, Chalkis and Cyprus. Generally speaking, students were willing to travel to Athens to attend classes from various regions, if a group with a minimum number of students (7) was impossible to be formed in their city of origin. In other words, the need for distant programme delivery was not that immense that ought to be looked after carefully and obviously the geographical segmentation did not lead to a unique segment to be targeted.

We then applied demographic segmentation, which involved dividing the market into groups based on their sex, age, occupation and education completed. We looked at the results of the potential WBL student survey (5.1) and realised that the male to female ratio was 73:27, the age of the potential students was almost equally distributed among the four age groups (25-30, 31-35, 36-40, 40+) and the occupation covered more than 11 different areas. The completed education data scattered throughout a number of options (college, further education, high school etc) but the extensive professional experience enabled the majority of them to be eligible for postgraduate studies. Information on income (of the potential students) was not available, but WBL studies were attractive to students across all the income groups, as the tuition fees were / are lower than those of other postgraduate programmes for professionals.

It was obvious from the above analysis that the application of various demographic variables did not reveal any specific market segments to be targeted (male dominance in the students-to-be population was not taken into account for segmentation purposes as obviously the programmes should be targeting at both sexes). Similar were the results we ended up with, after we applied psychological segmentation i.e. identification of potential groups for

targeting based on their social class, lifestyle or personality characteristics. The graduates and students-to-be have come / are coming from various social classes with most of them from the lower middle, upper middle and lower upper. We were not able to classify the graduates and potential students according to their lifestyle (conservative, yuppie etc) and personality characteristics (ambitious, compulsive etc), which may also play a certain role in the process of selecting a specific university or a programme.

Marketers are often interested in the way consumers respond to an actual programme or service rather than in their general lifestyle or personality. Behavioural variables can be used for market segmentation purposes, as behaviour has direct implications for what institutions and programmes consumers segments will choose. According to Kotler there are a number of variables, which can be applied for behavioural segmentation such as user status, benefits sought, usage rate and stage of readiness. The last one provided a good platform for market segmentation for the GCWBLP, because it is particularly applicable when an institution launches / markets a new programme. At any given time, some people of the potential market are unaware of its existence; some are aware; some are informed; some are interested; some are desirous; and some intend to buy. The distribution of people in various stages of readiness is very important when it comes to design the marketing strategy. During the initial stage of a programme (as it was the case for WBL) more of the potential students were unaware of it and advertising could have been the centre of the marketing efforts to target those most likely to find the programme interesting. Successful campaign meant that more people were aware and the advertising could concentrate on the programme benefits and other issues.

After considering the whole range of segmentation variables, we had to identify the most appropriate ones in the case of the Greek Centre and the work based learning programmes. The above evaluation of geographic, demographic, psychological and behavioural ways of segmentation disclosed that only the last one might had been relevant to our case. The next issue we had to deal with was the effectiveness of this segmentation way. Generally speaking, effective segmentation is the one that reveals information on how to reach and influence each segment. We realised that the segments stemming from the behavioural segmentation (although substantial in size) were not easily measurable and accessible as their characteristics could not be easily determined. In other words, we could not precisely establish the characteristics (city, age, education, occupation, lifestyle etc) of those who were unaware.



aware, informed etc about the WBL studies, as these programmes appeal to people with diversified location, age, education, occupation, social class and lifestyle. From this point of view, even the application of behavioural variables could not lead to effective market segmentation.

The ineffectiveness of segmenting - from GCWBLP's point of view - the market of working professionals intending to undertake a postgraduate award in conjunction with the unlimited subjects work based learning studies can be conducted in were two very critical points in our selection of the marketing strategy. It was understood that GCWBLP could not go after one or several market segments but had to go after the whole market (mass marketing) with one proposition (WBL programme) in its effort to attract as many consumers as possible. In other words, the Centre had to follow the same positioning for the entire market and not a different one for every target market.

The application of mass marketing approach in the case of the GCWBLP has a distinctive feature. Usually, the mass marketer pays little or no attention to potential differences in consumer preferences and tries to convince all the potential students that his programme (curriculum) is the best for all. However, in the case of WBL Studies, programme customisation for organisations and individuals allows the individual learners' preferences to be taken into consideration. Even in this case, the curriculum is one (work), the target is everybody who has accumulated substantial experiential learning in his/her own field and every organisation which accepts the WBL benefits and therefore, the principles of mass marketing still fully apply.

To successfully approach the whole market, the Centre had to develop effective communication with its audience. The need for effective communication is extremely important especially in the case of GCWBLP as it offers a completely innovative programme (WBL) that has not yet enjoyed the desired level of awareness. Communication for educational institutions usually involves marketing literature, advertising and public relations. The section below deals with the first of these tools.

### 6.3 GCWBLP MARKETING LITERATURE EVALUATION

Generally speaking, marketing literature consists of the institution's published materials, which are designed to convey the most important messages to its most important audience: the potential students. GCWBLP, until June 2001, used to send out photocopied fact sheets to prospective students. The development of the first ever brochure was based on implementation of a 6-step action research approach (as previously analysed in 4.3.2), which commenced by asking questions about the current literature adequacy and collecting and analysing literature of institutions offering postgraduate courses targeted at working professionals. The action research cycle was completed (August 2001) with the production of the new brochure that improved the existing situation. However, new questions were again raised about the communication effectiveness of the new brochure in comparison to that of literature produced by other institutions. An evaluation of the GCWBLP marketing literature (and overall of all the materials used to be sent out) had to be made with the objective to come up with further improvements to the current brochure.

We contacted (as potential students) all the main private (6.1.1 – I to XVI), public (6.2) and distance learning institutions (6.3) presented above and the majority of them responded promptly by sending their informative packs on the MBA courses they offer so that our comparative study will be done on the same basis. We received no material from the HOU, ALEC and the University of Peiraeus that referred us to their web site for further information, the ULV that suggested a visit to their campus for a “private conversation”, the CeMS that responded by sending photocopied material instead of brochures and the City and North College that were not contacted as they are Thessaloniki-based.

I tried to approach the collected marketing material with the eyes of a potential student who had no other source of information (except of that brochure) for consideration. The evaluation was based on the adequacy of the collected brochures to inform me on everything that I wanted to know about my prospective school/course. In other words, the communication effectiveness of every brochure had to be established and compared to each other. To establish this effectiveness we had to identify the critical factors-parameters a potential student would consider in order to form an ideal perception about the programmes and the university. This perception might have no connection to the final decision. In other words, an excellent brochure does not secure the institution's selection by the students, as other

parameters (e.g. personal needs, course content, tuition fees etc) often tend to play a more significant role.

We initially determined (4.3.2) a number of equally weighted factors as very important ones a brochure must inform its audience about such as: course content, courses variety, course timetables, faculty profiles, library facilities, class size and programme recognition. The course variety factor was eventually out of evaluation as all the collected brochures presented only one course (MBA) and did not refer to other courses offered by the institution. No institution offered information on class sizes and also this variable was not considered as well. The factor “programme recognition” was replaced (as only the public universities are recognised) by the “career prospects” that refers to the career development due to the completion of the specific course. The factor “library facilities” was also replaced by “facilities” to include all the institution’s facilities (library, computer, campus etc).

New factors were introduced for evaluation purposes such as: dean’s message, institution’s philosophy, university’s data, modules description, admission requirements, alumni, tuition fees and payment methods. The “dean’s message” factor referred to a welcome introductory note that may have been given by the dean, academic director, president etc. The “university’s data” was associated with the information provided in terms of the overseas-based university (the specific local institution represents in Greece) that issues the awards. The “alumni” included information on association of past graduates, photos and comments about the course by them etc. On top of the above content related variables, other factors relevant to the overall brochure presentation were also considered such as: front cover layout and paper quality. Finally, the cover letter enclosed with the brochure was evaluated along with reference to the web site. The latter factor had an increasing importance as most institutions had developed web sites that provided more thorough data about their programmes than the information presented in their printed literature.

The assumption that all the factors were equally weighted gave a certain degree of subjectivity to this analysis, as some factors (e.g. module descriptions) were definitely more important than others (e.g. facilities). However, introduction of weightings for every factor could not settle this issue, as it was also subjective to determine how much more important one factor was in comparison to another one. On the other side, the large number of factors

(17) reassured that the overall score would be rather objective as every factor contributed on average less than six percent to the overall score.

All the collected material were evaluated by the GCWBLP team with the application of the identified factors and finally marks were awarded as follows: 1 for poor level (i.e. factor was mentioned in a very short phrase), 2 for moderate, 3 for good, 4 for very good and 5 for excellent. Score zero (0) was given to the factors for which no information was given at all (e.g. lack of dean's message at the BCA brochure), while n.a. stands for "not applicable" in certain factors (e.g. facilities in the case of the GCWBLP). The assessment had exclusively to do with the quality and clarity of the presented information and not with the quality of the factors (course, facilities, fees etc). An overall average score (OAS) was produced for every institution and for every factor and compared to the relevant GCWBLP score with the objective to identify the weak and strong points of its brochure and propose further improvements. Table 9 presents the scores for the 17 factors of the 14 participated institutions inclusive of GCWBLP. The following conclusions were drawn from Table 9.

- The institutions performed very well in communicating the course contents, description of modules and admission requirements but they provided very little information on their faculty.
- Most of the institutions avoided providing information on the tuition fees and mode of payment by mail but encouraged potential students to visit their offices to have a conversation about various issues inclusive of the fees.
- All the respondents were referred to their web sites that (most of them) were (are) bilingual and complemented the information provided by the published material. Most (nine out of thirteen) institutions accompanied their brochures with a cover letter, which (in a number of cases) was either too long or not personalised.
- The most spectacular response was that of the ICBS that enclosed a CD-ROM with plenty of information on video format (messages by the president, dean, facilities etc). The weak point of this CD was the lack of data about the tuition fees and the collaborating overseas-based university.
- The most complete response was the ALBA brochure that apart from the above factors provided also adequate information on the institution's mission, strategy, academic council etc.

		I N S T I T U T I O N S														
		A G S M	A L B A	B C A	E U	E E D E	I C B S	I C O N	I S T	I D E F	M E D	N Y C	U I A	A U E B	O A S	G C W B L P
F A C T O R S	Course content	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3.7	3
	Module description	4	5	5	4	3	4	2	3	2	2	5	4	5	3.7	3
	Course timetables	3	3	5	4	2	3	2	4	2	2	3	5	3	3.2	3
	Dean's message	0	4	0	4	4	5	0	4	0	0	4	4	4	2.5	4
	Philosophy of Institution	3	4	3	4	3	5	2	3	1	2	4	4	4	3.2	4
	University's data	2	n. a.	2	4	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	n. a.	2.4	3
	Career prospects	4	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	3.5	2
	Faculty profiles	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	5	1.1	0
	Facilities	2	4	2	2	1	5	2	3	1	2	3	3	4	2.6	n.a.
	Admission requirements	3	5	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	5	5	3.6	3
	Alumni	3	4	2	3	0	3	2	4	2	3	4	3	4	2.8	3
	Tuition fees	5	3	5	2	4	2	2	5	1	1	1	1	5	2.8	5
	Payment methods	5	2	5	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	4	2.1	4
	Front cover layout	4	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	4	4	4	3.5	3
	Paper quality	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	2	1	4	4	4	3.5	2
	Cover letter	3	2	4	0	0	5	0	3	0	2	3	3	2	2.1	0
	Web site	3	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	2	4	4	4	4	3.8	1
Average Index		3.1	3.9	3.2	2.8	2.6	3.3	1.8	3.8	1.6	1.9	3.2	4.1	3.8	2.9	2.7

Table 9 Brochures factor index analysis

- The most “unexpectedly good” reply was the 32-page brochure of the (public) AUEB that not only communicated very well the identified factors but also presented exceptionally

well a number of past graduates (photos and comments), the profile of current students, the research laboratories and its educational philosophy.

- All the brochures verified that institutions had paid special attention to the brochure's front cover, design layout and paper quality, as it was understood that this brochure was the selling "vehicle" for their programmes.

GCWBLP's current (June 2002) response to enquiries included the 16-page brochure (Appendix 3), an application form and a colour photocopied list of the tuition fees all enclosed into a white folder with "The Queen's Anniversary Prize" indication on the front cover and the contact details in the inside page. There was no cover letter enclosed, while the brochure contained no information on faculty. The web site mentioned (that of the NCWBLP) was not that informative as the reference to the GCWBLP and its current programmes was (is) very limited (only the contact address) and potential students with low level of English language understanding were (are) not able to get any benefit from it. The overall design, paper quality and front cover were of average standards comparing to the majority of the participated brochures. The OAS of the Greek Centre brochure (2.7) was slightly below the overall average of the 13 other brochures (2.9) simply because a number of institutions produced brochures evaluated between moderate and good. We should not be misled by this performance but proceed with revision of the current brochure by taking into consideration the following points:

- The academic factor should be reinforced by describing the current WBL programmes more thoroughly (i.e. credit mechanism, module description), by clarifying the structure of the bachelor's programme and by referring to the DProf award as well.
- Reference should be made to the benefits for an organisation as a result of employees' participation to WBL programmes.
- A more attractive front cover and better paper quality should be applied to establish a higher education institution brochure image rather than an average product literature look.
- A web site targeted exclusively at the local market must be developed to provide updated information on the GCWBLP and its programmes.
- A personalised cover letter should be enclosed for every response.

Ideally, the revised brochure will be also evaluated by applying the above technique and its performance and score will have to be improved in comparison to its previous ones. This revision process will be an on-going one (annually) to ensure that maximum communication effectiveness is achieved that will lead to higher conversion rates of prospective students to actual ones. We have so far analysed the first tool (marketing literature) of an educational institution communication plan. The following section addresses the other two: advertising and public relations.

## 6.4 GCWBLP ADVERTISING AND PR ACTIVITIES REVIEW

The idea of advertising in higher education sounds a new one, but educators were using advertising as long as 130 years ago. In 1869 an advertisement for Harvard College appeared on the outside cover of Harper's Magazine and created uproar as such a thing had never been heard before. GCWBLP has run advertising campaigns twice in the past to build its long-term image and WBL programmes awareness and has also undertaken a limited number of public relations activities. The following sections intend to review and evaluate the results of these activities.

### 6.4.1 ADVERTISING RESULTS EVALUATION

Tracking advertising results enables analysis and assessment of advertising efforts and evaluation of advertising expenditures in the light of income generated, which allows the advertiser to weigh the cost effectiveness of the advertising placements and determine the types of advertising that are appropriate for the programme. When you track advertising results, you are actually doing the research for the next marketing effort as knowing what works and what does not work helps to fine-tune the future advertising strategy. The most important component of advertising evaluation is the media testing that seeks to determine whether a given medium is a cost-effective vehicle in reaching and influencing the target audience. A common way to test a medium vehicle is to place a coupon advertisement and see how many coupons are returned, but in the case of higher education advertising, an institution can keep track of the enquiries generated by each advertisement instead.

GCWBLP ran its first newspaper and magazine campaign in two phases from 7/09/2000 to 16/10/2000 (6 weeks) and from 16/11/2000 to 11/12/2000 (4 weeks). This and the following

year's campaigns were mainly targeted at the Sunday's newspapers audience, which was understood to be the highest among the audiences of various days of the week taking into consideration the newspaper circulation data. The 2000 campaign included 65 insertions placed as follows: 30 insertions were placed in various Sunday newspapers (this day's audience), 20 insertions in the highest circulating newspaper on Mondays (appointments section) and on Saturdays, 10 insertions in 3 financial newspapers on various days and the remaining 5 in 4 selected financial magazines. The sizes of the advertisements were 6cm X 2 columns and 1/4 of the page for newspapers and magazines respectively. All the advertisements were in black and white colours with the exception of three advertisements in magazines that were in full colour. The total advertising expenditure was € 19,010 (€ 15,730 for newspapers / € 3,280 for magazines).

It should be highlighted at this point that the Centre, in its effort to evaluate response from advertisements of various sizes published in different periods of time, had two advertisements placed in the same Sunday newspaper on 11 March 2001 and on 17 June 2001. The sizes, costs, number of enquiries and confirmation rates were as follows: The first advertisement was 29cm X 5 columns, cost € 4,249, created 61 enquiries with 6 of them finally joined the courses. The second advertisement was 23cm X 4 columns, cost € 3,718, generated only 10 enquiries and produced only one confirmation. It was believed that the second advertisement failed to deliver any results due to its timing (June). The first advertisement's performance was considered to be average due to the high cost per enquiry (€ 70) and cost per confirmed student (€ 708).

Due to this performance, the decision was taken that the next year's advertising campaign would be implemented with a small size advertisement and within the period September to December. Actually, the 2001 campaign commenced on 26/08/2001 and lasted all the way to 29/10/2001 (9 weeks). For comparison purposes, we will focus in this study on the effectiveness of the campaigns we ran for the same period (commencing September) with the same size advertisement for two consecutive years (2000 and 2001).

The layout and text of all the advertisements for 2000 and 2001 for magazines and newspapers was identical and it is presented as Appendix 4. We provided telephone number for immediate responses, which we tracked on a daily basis. For every caller we recorded



name, telephone (if it was given) and address (if it was requested to send out printed information). Every effort was also made to get answers to the question: Can you tell how (which medium) you learn about the programmes? It is the most important question for the purposes of tracking as it enables evaluation of advertisement recall rates per different medium. It was found out that approximately only one out of four respondents could actually recall the medium he/she saw the advertisement first. This was due to two main reasons:

First, both the campaigns were based on the Sunday press and it was (is) common for readers to buy a number of newspapers on Sundays. Second, a large number of advertisements (about 10) used to be placed within 4 days (Fridays to Mondays) in various media. Due to this media recall difficulty, we were unable to determine the number of responses generated by each advertising placement. However, a rough estimate on the effectiveness (in terms of enquiry generation) of each advertising campaign as a whole activity could be made based on the relationship between the weekly response rate and the number of advertisements. Figure 12 presents this relationship for the 2000 campaign. The dates indicated in the horizontal axis refer to the week commencing (e.g. w/c 7<sup>th</sup> September, w/c 14<sup>th</sup> September etc).

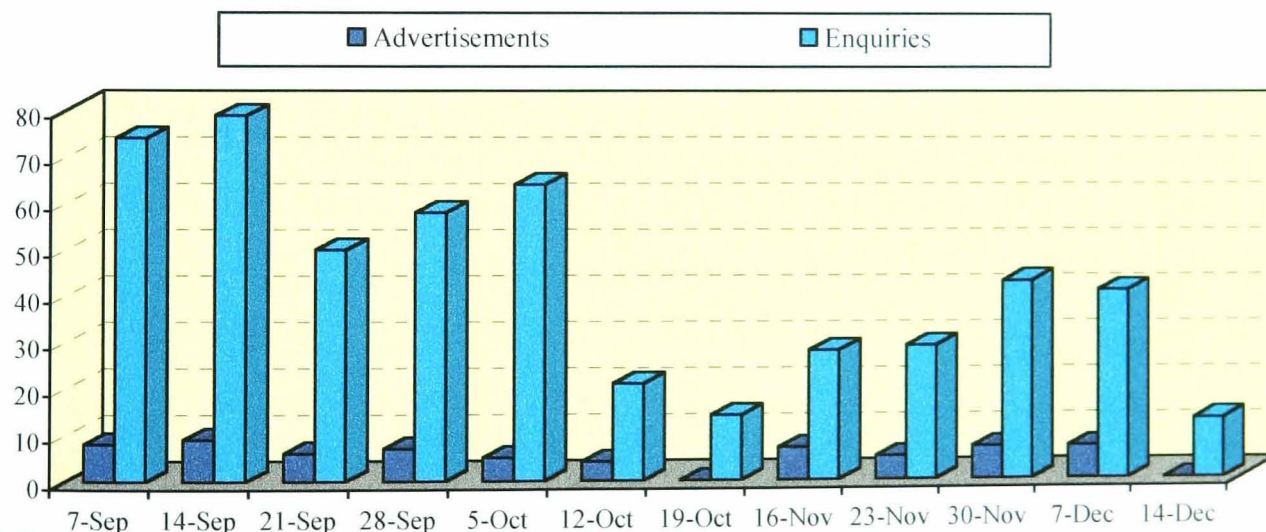


Figure 12 Weekly advertisements and response rate relationship for the 2000 campaign

The lack of awareness -prior to the campaign- about the WBL studies was the main reason for the high response rates (74 and 79 respectively) during the first two weeks of the campaign. Every advertisement generated on an average basis 8-9 calls weekly during the first four weeks and about 5-6 calls over the last five weeks. It is worth mentioning that enquiries were

received even during the weeks there were no advertisements (w/c 19<sup>th</sup> Oct: 14 calls, w/c 14<sup>th</sup> Dec: 13 calls). A number of enquiries were also generated for a number of weeks after the campaign was over, but for the purpose of this analysis the tracking period ended only one week after the advertising period was over. The period from w/c 26<sup>th</sup> October to w/c 9<sup>th</sup> November was out of the graph as no advertisements were placed and no significant response was to be recorded.

The awareness raised in the first phase of the campaign was well above that of the second phase: 360 overall enquires generated from 39 advertisements (9.2 calls per advertisement) for phase I, 155 calls received from 26 advertisements (6 calls per advertisement) for phase II. The first phase was also less costly in terms of cost per respondent, which was calculated by dividing the total advertising cost with the number of respondents: € 34 cost per enquiry for Phase I vs. € 43 for Phase II (Overall cost: € 37).

Up to this point, we have been quite delighted with the response generated with the advertising placements. However, the most important tracking tool is the conversion rate that refers to the rate of enquiries translated into sales. The definition of the conversion period was very important as a number of respondents did take time (which varied from 1 to 6 months) to consider before they finally applied for the programmes. We therefore defined 6 months the conversion period and the conversion rates (percentage of confirmed students who responded to the advertisements of the total number of respondents) were as follows: Phase I: 6.4%, Phase II: 4.5%. (Overall conversion rate: 5.8% or 30 students confirmed from 515 respondents). The overall average cost to capture each confirmed student was calculated as: € 19,010 (total advertising cost) divided by 30 confirmed students = € 634 per student.

As we were unable to evaluate the recall (and obviously conversion) rate per medium and advertising insertion, we decided to follow for the 2001 campaign a placement strategy similar to that of the 2000 campaign. Sixty-one insertions were overall placed, with 35 in assorted Sunday newspapers, 16 in two daily newspapers (appointments section) on Mondays / Tuesdays, 7 insertions in 3 financial newspapers and only 3 in selected financial magazines. The newspaper advertisement size was slightly larger than that of 2000 (8.5cm X 2 columns). while all the advertisements (inclusive of those in magazines) were in black and white colours. However, the total spending was significantly higher: € 27.630 (€ 25.860 for



newspapers and € 1,770 for magazines). Figure 13 shows the weekly response rates in relationship to the number of advertising insertions. The tracking period was three weeks longer than the advertising period as we kept receiving approximately 10 calls per week after the campaign was over.

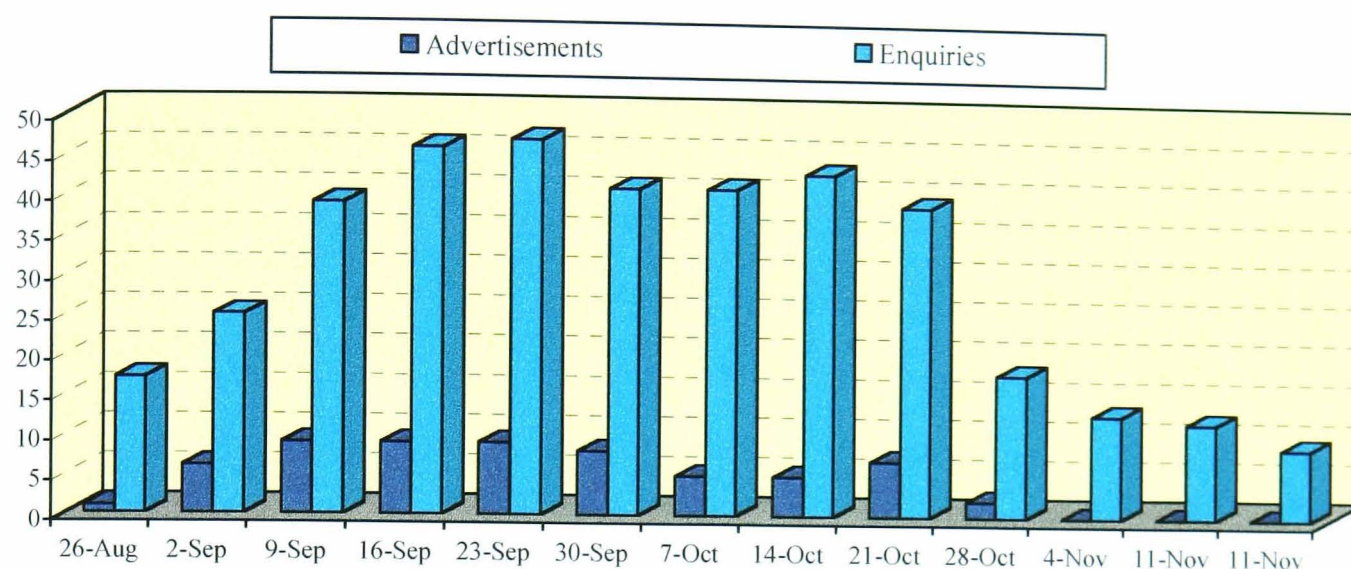


Figure 13 Weekly advertisements and response rate relationship for the 2001 campaign

The 2001 campaign, as expected, generated a lower number of enquiries compared to that of the 2000 campaign as the target audience established some WBL recognition and awareness during the advertising activity in 2000. The average response rate per advertisement, cost per enquiry, conversion rate and cost per actual (confirmed) student for the 2001 campaign were compared to the relevant data of the 2000 campaign and presented in the Table 10.

Year	Total cost (€)	No. of insertions	No. of enquiries	Enquiries per insertion	Cost per enquiry (€)	Actual students	Conversion rate (%)	Cost (€) per actual student
2000	19,010	65	515	7.9	37	30	5.8	634
2001	27,630	61	390	6.4	71	28	7.2	987

Table 10 Comparative advertising campaigns results analysis

The weak point of the 2001 campaign was that the cost per enquiry increased from € 37 (2000) to € 71 as a reflection of the above-mentioned lower response level but mainly as a result of the basic rate increment (in the range of 10% to 70%) for all the media and specially for the Sunday newspapers. This extraordinary increment in conjunction with the enlargement of the insertion (from 6cm X 2col to 8.5cm X 2col) resulted in having to increase spending in

2001 by 42% to place 4 insertions less than the previous year! The strong point of the 2001 campaign was the improved conversion rate to 7.2% from 5.8% in 2000. This improvement was basically due to the brochure (that replaced the photocopied material in use) that was used to be sent out for further information to the campaign respondents and was presented above (6.3).

We should note at this point that another 3 and 4 students were finally admitted to the programmes (after the 6-month conversion period), thus bringing the total confirmed student numbers up to 33 and 32, the conversion rates up to 6.4% and 8.2% and the cost per confirmed student down to € 576 and € 863 for the years 2000 and 2001 respectively.

Evaluating the advertising results is an effective means of keeping on top of the advertising efforts but the collected data must be viewed in perspective within a broad set of evaluative criteria. This is because the customer who responds to this week's advertisement may do so because he/she saw a number of previous placements, while the advertisements placed this week may generate response not earlier than the next campaign. The effects of advertising on short and long-term basis are often too complex to be precisely measured or assessed.

Having evaluated the previous advertising campaign results and understood the difficulties in effective advertising planning, the following points should be taken into consideration for the future GCWBLP advertising campaigns:

- Advertising is overall an effective communication tool for GCWBLP as its programmes still have low awareness level and the target audience does not know much about WBL studies.
- The advertising activity should cover the period from September to mid December when the search for university programmes reaches its peak by the audience intending to join a course commencing either September/October or January.
- The advertisement size should be small (e.g. 8-10cm X 2 columns) enough to enable the advertising budget to buy 60-70 insertions to adequately cover the above period with a possible 4-5 weeks break. Nothing guarantees that additional spending will secure additional confirmed students.

- The potential student (5.1) and graduates profiles along with the response feedback from the 2000 and 2001 campaigns should be seriously considered to determine a media selection that communicates with the target group effectively.
- Given the small advertisement size, a more powerful message should be developed to instantly catch attention of the audience. For example, an advertisement in an IT magazine may have as a key message: “New Master’s programme in IT”.
- The introduction of an improved brochure (discussed in 6.3) will establish higher favourable feelings about WBL studies thus convincing more potential students and further increasing the conversion rate.

Regardless of the advertising campaign success, we should always keep in mind that advertising is only one of the three tools educational institutions use for communication purposes. The following section addresses the third tool: public relations.

#### 6.4.2 PR ACTIVITIES REVIEW

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), public relations consist of efforts to obtain favourable interest in the institution and/or its programmes through planting significant news about them in publications or through the institution’s own activities and events. Many public relations activities date back to 1920s when a number of American Universities (Harvard, Yale, Columbia etc) set up influential publicity offices to spread the institution’s fame and to attract students and donors. Nowadays, public relations offices operate in most of the universities and mainly prepare and distribute press releases about admissions and fund-raising activities as well as other campus activities.

The best way to start with public relations is to define your public and how you are going to address them. Gibbs and Knapp (2002) identify the following list of PR publics: students, existing and current staff, potential partners, opinion markets, competition, donors, facility and host country. In the case of GCWBLP, the list is rather short and basically the main public to be addressed is the students. The basic tools used for public relations programmes are press releases, in-house journals, sponsorship, exhibitions and product placement (TV, radio).

The PR activities undertaken by the GCWBLP have been rather limited so far and were associated with only the first tool. The developed relations with selected publications enabled the Centre to publish a number of press releases (Appendix 5). The first –and most impressive– was a two-page presentation of the programmes under the title “An educational challenge” that was published in the bi-monthly Interamerican’s magazine “Net” (March-April 2000). The second press release was published in the Sunday newspaper “Kathimerini” (1/10/2000) and sufficiently presented the programmes in the form of interview with the Academic Director. For the year 2001, the releases were short (financial magazine “Chrima”, September 2001 and financial newspaper “Kerdos”, 18/09/2001) but adequately introduced the Middlesex University and the NCWBLP and highlighted the WBL concept, its tailor-made character for every student, its benefits for the employers whose employees participate in the programme and prizes awarded to the programmes in the UK (1996 and 1998). There was no doubt that all the press releases successfully informed our target audience about the new concept of obtaining a postgraduate award and its benefits.

A public relations activity plan for the GCWBLP should consider only three tools: Press releases, in-house journal and exhibition. Sponsorship and product placement were out of consideration due to their high cost in relation to the limited available budget. The future PR plan should be developed along the following guidelines:

- Press releases. Continuous efforts should be made to have as many press releases as possible in various media. The title must be attractive enough to capture the reader’s attention instantly; the text must be clear and the presentation distinctive. It could be in the form of an interview or a special event highlight.
- In-house journals. GCWBLP should consider introduction of a newsletter that will be targeted at past graduates, potential students and other publics. It should be of high quality and use professional graphics to create a powerful impact. Quarterly sounds like a frequency good enough to stir interest for the following issue.
- Exhibition. The yearly exhibition on education that has been taking place early March since 1999 is a good public relations opportunity. During the latest exhibition (7-10 March 2002) 200 institutions participated, while the exhibition guide was distributed to 60,000 visitors. It should be noted that the target audience was very wide but participation of almost all the institutions mentioned previously in 6.1 indicated that the feedback must

have been positive. The cost was also affordable with about € 2.000 in total for a basic stand and one-page presentation at the exhibition's guide.

We have so far reviewed and evaluated the key communication tools (brochure, advertising, public relations) GCWBLP has used before and we have proposed steps to be taken to further improve their communication effectiveness. On top of these three tools, direct mail has also been used before effectively. The following section examines the contribution of direct mail campaign towards exploring niche marketing opportunities.

## 6.5 DIRECT MAIL AND NICHE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES REVIEW

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), an analysis of competing institutions or specific programmes often reveals the following competitive roles: the leader, the challenger, the follower and the nicher. The leader is the acknowledged dominant institution (programme), the challenger is the runner up that aspires to match or surpass the leader, while the follower strives to hold to its present market. The nichers are those institutions and programmes that fill one or more niches, which are not well served (or not served at all) by other institutions. GCWBLP is a nicher institution that offers the work based learning programmes, which fill the niche (working professionals wishing to pursue a non-taught course that accredits their experiential learning) that no other institution can fill. This niche is understood to be of sufficient size (much larger than the above estimated of 2200 persons) and growth potential. The Greek Centre has undertaken a direct mail campaign with the objective to serve more effectively the identified niche.

It was believed that the niche market consists of professionals in various fields (engineering, banking, accounting, psychology, foreign languages teaching etc) who were very likely to meet the basic requirements for admission to a postgraduate WBL programme and likely to be members of various professional associations, societies, federations, unions etc. Targeting a specific association was, in other words, aiming at a large pool of prospective WBL students, which was part of the identified niche. We prepared a complete list of all the associations, societies etc in the country and we short-listed about 200 of them based in Athens and in the largest 10 Greek cities. The direct mail campaign targeted the 200 presidents of the associations in late January 2002 with personalised cover letters and the brochure presented in Appendix 3. The cover letter was short and highlighted the WBL benefits, philosophy and

flexibility of delivery (e.g. anywhere in Greece with minimum number of 7 students). The recipients were encouraged to visit the NCWBLP's web site or to call the GCWBLP office to receive further information about the programmes.

The response has been encouraging with about 20 enquiries that generated 6 presentations and one invitation to conference participation. The latter has been by far the most successful outcome of the direct mail campaign and the one that stands to make great impact on the recruitment levels for the Greek Centre. In fact, we were invited to participate in a conference on "Foreign Languages-Information Technology-Lifelong Learning" organised by the Association of Language School Owners of Eastern Crete. It was held during the weekend 6-7 April 2002 in Heraklion, Crete. The GCWBLP's Academic Director presented the evolution of Lifelong Learning during the last decade in Europe and in Greece and participated – as a member of the conference panel - in the open discussion on the above three concepts. The second day of the conference we made an one hour presentation on the WBL studies and philosophy to a crowd of about 50 people, all qualified language teachers (Appendix 6 presents evidence from the conference).

Undoubtedly, the most important conference outcome was the rapport we managed to build with the President and General Secretary of the Panhellenic Association of Language School Owners (Palso). Following, a number of meetings with them in Athens, we identified two possible areas that Palso and GCWBLP can work together for their own mutual benefits. The first area was the participation of Palso members in WBL programmes and the second one was the possible accreditation by Middlesex University of the Palso language tests that would elevate their status and recognisability in the Greek market. Both areas present opportunities with huge potential for the GCWBLP and especially the first one, taking into consideration that Palso is an association with 7,000 members nationally. A letter prepared by GCWBLP and endorsed by the President of Palso is to be mailed along with the brochure to all its members in November 2002, while press releases in the monthly association newspaper are scheduled to follow to further enhance the programmes' awareness among the members.

An implementation of the work based learning philosophy in the partnership with Palso is an excellent example whereby WBL provides a very good indication of what it can offer to individuals (self employed-owners of foreign languages institutes) and their organisations. On



individual basis, it will enhance the personal sense of achievement and it will reinforce the project management and methodological skills. On organisational basis, the knowledge created through the project activity will contribute to effective knowledge management, enhancement of intellectual capital and organisational learning with obvious business benefits. At the same time, the partnership with Palso does full justice to the key WBL feature (recognition of bodies of knowledge that are outside the university and derived through the interdisciplinarity of work) as the potential learners have accumulated knowledge in several disciplines over their working life. Work based learning is to be applied to articulate the accumulated tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (as analysed in Chapter 1) with obvious outcome the improved organisational performance.

Out of the six presentations we have made so far, the one with the best recruitment potential was that to the President of Esma (Association of Air Force Engineering School Graduates), which has approximately one thousand members. All the members have completed a three-year undergraduate course with specialisation in various engineering subjects (e.g. civil, electrical, mechanical etc) and have accumulated long working experience. The Greek State does not recognise their basic studies and obviously they do not enjoy full professional rights. We have investigated on behalf of Esma the possibility of its members to join the relevant Institutes in the United Kingdom (e.g. Institute of Civil Engineers, Institute of Mechanical Engineers etc) after the completion of a WBL course at postgraduate level. The response was very encouraging as certain schemes (mature candidate, senior route etc) allow mature candidates to become members, thus enjoying full professional rights in the U.K., in the whole of the European Union and obviously in Greece. The next step for GCWBLP is to approach all the members with presentations or direct mail campaign to present the way to acquire professional rights with the intention to build recruitment from this special group of professionals.

Work based learning as mentioned before (Section 2.5) is not simply a route to a university award but a framework which has many creative possibilities. A number of different WBL applications in the UK was previously presented within the context of a community of practice, local community and undergraduate study. In the first two cases government endorsement and public funding were crucial for implementation of the programmes, while the last application refers to the Middlesex University undergraduate curriculum (RAL is used

in pursuing an award in a subject area) and obviously is not to be considered in the case of the Greek Centre.

However, taking into consideration the success from the partnerships with educational providers in UK, Hong Kong and Cyprus and the strong preference for mode 1 knowledge provision (as expressed previously by individuals and organisations in our research undertaken) a new application-niche market opportunity emerges for the Greek Centre: Incorporation of taught knowledge that carries a predetermined number of credit points and is provided by another institution into a WBL programme. This application allows WBL to fully deliver its benefits to individual learners and their organisations (as mentioned above) and also to justify its nature to intersect mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge as a combination of experiential learning with taught subject matters. The collaboration with other educational providers is a strong business opportunity with high potential as the Greek Centre can capitalise on guaranteed clientele to achieve further financial success. A key priority for the Centre therefore is to identify the potential partners that successful collaboration can be built upon.

We have so far reviewed and evaluated all the forms (marketing publications, advertising, public relations, direct mail) GCWBLP has used so far to communicate with its markets. It is now obvious that effective communication is very crucial for the success of every educational institution and all its forms should be well co-ordinated and developed in line with the long-term institution's marketing plan. Chapter 7 intends to put together a three-year marketing plan GCWBLP should follow to achieve its objectives, which for the purpose of this project have been defined (4.2) as exclusively recruitment objectives.

# 7

## THE MARKETING PLANNING

*You've got to come up with a plan.  
You can't wish things will get better.*

- John F. Welch  
CEO, General Electric

Most educational institutions acknowledge the value of formal planning when they encounter serious enrolment declines. At first administrators hope the situation may improve by itself without taking corrective action. When they realise that this is unlikely to happen, they begin to investigate ways to monitor the problems and develop plans to address them. The plan is a written document containing the results of the planning process. In the area of marketing planning Kotler and Fox (1995) identify two levels of planning: the strategic marketing planning and the tactical marketing planning. The first has to do with planning the overall direction of the institution to respond to its markets and opportunities (institutional strategy), while the latter is defined as the specific action steps needed to take advantage of the marketing opportunities identified through strategic planning (marketing strategy). The sections below illustrate the steps in the marketing planning process at both the strategic and tactical levels.

### 7.1 STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANNING

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), strategic planning is a process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution's goals and capabilities and its changing

marketing opportunities. These opportunities are identified over time and decisions revolve around investing or divesting resources to address these opportunities.

The context in which these strategic decisions in the planning process are made is the external environment, the clear institutional mission and the supporting goals and objectives, followed by sound strategy and appropriate implementation. Figure 14 presents the strategic planning process. We will illustrate below the stages in the strategic planning process in the case of GCWBLP. The implementation of strategic management principles in Chapter 3 included analysis of key planning elements (e.g. S.W.O.T. analysis etc). The section below will build upon the findings of this analysis and proceed further with evaluation of the other planning parameters.

The first step in the strategic planning was to analyse the environment because changes in the environment usually call for new institutional strategies. We have so far conducted an environmental analysis and identified the major threats and opportunities for the GCWBLP (3.2.2 - S.W.O.T. analysis).



Figure 14 Strategic planning process

The most important threat was found to be the lack of state recognition for the WBL awards. It is a threat of low impact on the Centre as our main target has been the employees of the private sector companies. However, this threat has been monitored as the Centre has been involved in providing support to past graduates applying at Dikatsa for state recognition of

their awards. In the competitive environment, the market entry of ALEC, IDEF or Open University did not constitute a threat that called for action, as those institutions have not been very aggressive in competing for students. An institution can stay intact by managing its threats successfully, but it does not grow. This can be achieved only by managing its opportunities successfully.

GCWBLP has been enjoying superior competitive advantage by offering programmes that no other institution can offer in Greece. This offer provides a unique marketing opportunity that is able to secure high growth rates. The strong demand for postgraduate qualifications in various industries and the possibility of acquiring professional rights in selected fields (engineering, psychology etc) through completing an MA course are two great opportunities the successful management of which would enable the Centre to make great steps forward.

Following the environmental analysis, the institution should identify the major resources it has (strengths) and lacks (weaknesses). There was no doubt that GCWBLP's most serious strength has been the WBL programmes, their unique philosophy and flexible mode of delivery (all over the country – limited number of meetings). As far as the resources are concerned, the major resources (people, money and facilities) were evaluated as follows:

The Centre has an adequate number of skilled, enthusiastic and service-minded personnel and faculty able to carry their administrative and academic duties satisfactorily. The current size of the Centre indicates that the existing team is sufficient and capable of achieving the Centre's growth plans. GCWBLP's financial situation is sound with enough funds to support its operations and marketing activities and take on new projects. Finally, the facilities are adequate, while the lack of computer laboratory and academic library with reading room do not seem to be a weakness for the Centre as they are not necessary for the delivery of its programmes.

The lack of taught subject based theoretical knowledge provision by WBL studies in relation to the low awareness of the programmes within the Greek context lead to the development of certain scepticism about the status equality between WBL and taught programmes awards. However, the impact of this weakness on student recruitment is rather low and GCWBLP by

capitalising on its strengths can move forward to take advantage of the identified opportunities. To do so the mission, goals and objectives needed to be fully defined.

The GCWBLP's mission as defined by the mission statement (3.2.1) is "...to provide opportunities of the highest quality for qualified working professionals to build academic qualifications based on learning from and related to their jobs and for corporations to achieve business benefits through enhancement of their intellectual capital, creation of new knowledge and effective knowledge management....". The definition of mission leads to goals and objectives that are the variables the institution will emphasise in the long-term and short-term periods respectively. Every institution has a potential set of relevant goals from which it should select (e.g. improve its image, increase its awareness, attract better students, improve its teaching quality etc) the one(s) to emphasise as it cannot successfully pursue all these goals simultaneously. GCWBLP, for the purpose of this document, should focus on student enrolment and its goal must be "to increase the student enrolment over the period of the next three years". The expression of this goal in measurable and operational form is called objective and has been defined (4.2) as "to increase the student enrolment for the coming academic years by 25% on a year per year basis".

Once the environmental and resource analysis is completed and the goals and objectives are well defined, an institution is confident to proceed with reviewing current programmes and markets and formulate and implement a strategy to accomplish those goals and objectives. In the case of GCWBLP, this review was based on one analytical tool only: the product / market opportunity matrix. The other appropriate tool, known as academic portfolio model or Boston matrix (Kotler and Fox, 1995), classifies the various courses of an institution according to their relative market share and market growth rate. The Greek Centre offers one programme (WBL) only and therefore this tool was not appropriate for our analysis. The programme / market opportunity analysis presented above (3.2.3) concluded with market penetration (intensify promotion and recruitment of existing programme for existing market) and market development (locate new markets for current programmes) as the strategic choice on a short-term (defined as academic years 2002-03 and 2003-04) basis. Programme modification and service modification for new markets will be considered as the mid-term and long-term options (i.e. with effect from the academic year 2004-05).

The institutional strategy for every organisation should also take into consideration its competition. GCWBLP as analysed above (6.5) has a niche role in the market by offering the WBL programmes that constitute a separate market segment on top of the other segments (taught courses by private colleges, taught courses by public universities and distance learning courses). As a matter of fact there is no competitor directly competing with GCWBLP, although prospective WBL students may choose another college or university instead.

After the identification of the institutional strategy, the institution must make sure that the structure and people are in place to carry out its strategies. GCWBLP's current academic and administration structures are considered to be adequate to support the identified strategy implementation for at least the following two academic years. Should the Centre decide to proceed with programme modification or service modification for new markets in 2004-05, new organisational structure (faculty, administration, facilities) will have to be made available to support the new strategy.

We have so far completed the strategic marketing planning and formulated the broad strategy for GCWBLP. We should now proceed with the tactical marketing planning that intends to develop the marketing plan to implement the overall strategy.

## 7.2 THE THREE-YEAR MARKETING PLAN

A tactical marketing plan usually covers a period of one to two years, but for the purpose of this analysis we will include the coming three academic years. Generally speaking, the plan contains the following five sections: current marketing situation, objectives, marketing strategy, budget and control.

### **I. Current Marketing Situation**

GCWBLP's performance has been below expectations over the last two years in terms of enrolment rates for new students. Table 11 presents the new, continuing and graduate student numbers for the above period. The number of new students enrolled for the programmes included students from Cyprus through the partnership with Interlife, which is an Interamerican's (the largest private insurance company in Greece with 102 of its staff enrolled for the programmes in 1998 and 1999) associate insurance company.

	2000-01	2001-02
New students	67	55
Continuing students (previous year)	85	85
Total registered students	152	140
Graduates	67	91
Continuing students (next year)	85	49

Table 11 Student number analysis for the last two academic years

Actually, 15 students enrolled in 2000-01 but only 2 in the 2001-02 year from Cyprus. For the 2000-01 there were two new students enrolled for DProf vs. none for 2001-02. In other words, the number of new students joining BA/MA programmes – excluding Cypriots - increased from 50 in 2000-01 to 53 in 2001-02 or by 6%. The main reasons for the low recruitment level were the following: the 2001-02 retention rate – the percentage of new students who continue to attend after the first meeting – was not as high as that of the previous year; the group of the 15 insurance agents from Nationale Nederlanden postponed the commencement of their programmes to the coming academic year; and the Interlife's performance was well below expectations of 8 to 10 students.

A further breakdown of the new student numbers revealed that 33 and 32 students for 2000-01 and 2001-02 respectively joined as a result of the advertising campaigns we ran before and analysed in 6.4.1. The number of the students enrolled as a result of general publicity / “word of mouth” were 19 and 21 students for 2000-01 and 2001-02 and those who were admitted due to Interlife's activities were 15 and 2 for 2000-01 and 2001-02 respectively.

The current market conditions are favourable for the GCWBLP to achieve high growth rates, as it does not face direct competition by another institution thanks to the uniqueness of its WBL programmes. The market demand for postgraduate qualifications has been very strong and overall the current market situation seems to offer a number of promising opportunities, while the threats are definitely of low impact.

## II. Objectives

GCWBLP's goals and objectives were set exclusively around the enrolment increase. As mentioned above (7.1) the main objective has been defined as 25% increase on a yearly basis.



If we apply this percentage on the overall number of registered students for 2001-02 (e.g. 140), we should target for 175 registered students for the academic year 2002-03 (as of June 2003) or about 126 new students if we take into account that the number of the continuing students from the previous academic year is 49. The registered student objectives for the academic years 2003-04 and 2004-05 will have to be 219 and 273 respectively (i.e. annual increase of 25%). Assuming that one out of three (33%) registered students in any year complete their studies the following academic year (as it has been approximately the case in the previous years) the continuing students will be 59 and 73 for the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively. In other words, our targets for new students will be as follows (Table 12):

Academic year	New Students	Registered Students
2002-03	126	175
2003-04	160	219
2004-05	200	273

Table 12 Student enrolment objectives for the next three academic years

### III. Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy has to do with the selection of one or more market segments to target, the choice of the competitive positioning and the development of an effective marketing mix to reach the chosen consumers and achieve the identified objectives.

The market segmentation and targeting analysis above (6.2) concluded that GCWBLP's should not target only one or several specific segments but it should cover the whole market of professionals who contemplate undertaking a postgraduate course and corporations which consider alternative ways to enhance their intellectual capital. The Centre should apply mass marketing approach to attract as many corporations and students as possible from various fields in the WBL programmes. Having selected its target market, an institution will have to develop its competitive positioning strategy vis-à-vis other competitors serving the same target market. GCWBLP's mass marketing approach means that it will have practically to face all the higher education institutions that offer postgraduate courses for experienced professionals. The most meaningful difference between our offer and those of our competitors is the tailoring of programmes, which includes RAL (Recognition and Accreditation of Learning) but is fundamentally about producing relevant knowledge and expertise for the

individual and organisations. Our competitive positioning will have therefore to be based on this distinctive feature of WBL studies.

The next step in marketing strategy is to develop a marketing mix that will allow GCWBLP to effectively compete and achieve its objectives. According to Kotler and Fox (1995), the main components of the marketing mix are the 4 “Ps”: programme, price, place and promotion.

#### **(a) Programme**

The Greek Centre offers one programme (WBLS) that reflects its mission and defines the institution in the eyes of its markets. This programme is in fact an educational service, which is intangible but it is combined with tangible ones such as classroom space, books etc. This current mix of offering is in line with the needs and expectations of both individual and corporate potential clients as identified previously in Chapter 5.

Work based learning in Greece faces no government endorsement and recognition, which were very supportive factors for its emergence in the UK. However, companies do believe that WBL can enhance their intellectual capital and effective knowledge management capabilities but there seems to be no demand for specially customised programmes (with accreditation of company’s internal training courses as required in UK) for corporate clients with the exception of possible incorporation of training sessions to meet specific organisational needs. This demand defined a new marketing model (“the GCWBLP model”), which is characterised (Section 5.5) by employer’s involvement only in the design of the subject taught part and not in the negotiation of learning agreement. Individuals highly recognise a WBL award as a route for personal and career development. It is therefore obvious that although WBL enjoys different perception in Greece than that in the UK, it can still deliver the same benefits as those previously presented (2.5). On top of that the implementation in Greece fully satisfies its feature of “intersecting mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge, as a combination of experiential learning with taught subject matters”. Work based learning with its enhanced perception as a framework of creative possibilities can be applied in the case of potential partnerships with educational providers with a unique feature the incorporation of taught knowledge (provided by another institution) that carries a predetermined number of credit points into a WBL programme.

Work Based Learning studies are still going through the introduction stage of their life cycle (Section 3.2.4 – Figure 2) and achievement of the above enrolment objectives will transfer them into the growth stage. To prolong the growth stage, GCWBLP will have to reinforce the programmes with new attributes that may combine both the WBL concept and the conventional programme features (e.g. a new programme on top of the current WBL programmes that will include taught courses apart from WBL modules). The new programme proposed launch period is 2004-05 but the development process will have to start the previous year in order to identify opportunities and select the best one to proceed with. This course of action is in line with the mid and long-term strategic options previously identified, which were related to modified programmes intended to service new and existing markets.

#### **(b) Price**

Programme pricing decisions are very important to the Greek Centre, as tuition fees (paid to the University with a portion only to the Centre) are its only source of revenue for its operation. It is very crucial for every institution to understand how potential students perceive tuition fees, before setting or changing prices. A few of them may use price as a measure of quality and perceive that a programme A is better than programme B because it is more expensive. Others are looking into the overall picture of tuition hours along with facilities and try to find the best value for money. In any case, WBL programmes are very competitively priced if we take into account the information presented in Table 8. A taught MBA course (one year full-time) offered by a private college is priced at about € 10,000, while a student who receives 80 RAL credits will pay € 6,500 for an MA (WBL) one-year course. The existing price structure has been effective since September 2001 and it will remain the same for the following three academic years to provide the Centre the opportunity to achieve its enrolment objectives. The introduction of taught modules into a new programme (proposed for 2004-05) will lead to higher fees compared with current WBL programme fees. The new programme should be priced competitively to attract students willing to spend € 10,000 for a taught course. A tuition fee of about € 8,500 seems to allow positioning of the new course in between a WBL and a conventional postgraduate course and to adequately cover additional tutorial costs.

### **(c) Place**

Delivery of a programme is very important as it determines who can benefit from this. GCWBLP has been delivering WBL programmes at high convenience for the students who do not live in Athens but can attend classes from their hometowns (if a group of 7 can be formed) without additional cost. The limited number of meetings (approximately 12) provides a competitive advantage for the WBL programmes over the taught courses and plays a key role in the decision making process for a busy executive.

### **(d) Promotion**

It is the most important “P” of the marketing mix as it determines the tools the institution will use to reach its market and “convert” potential students into actual ones. Our key message in all our promotional activities is (will be) the unique WBL benefits for both individuals and organisations as previously analysed (2.5). We have already evaluated all the promotional activities undertaken in the past by the GCWBLP and we are now in a position to propose the activities to be implemented to enable the Centre to reach the accomplishment of its enrolment objectives:

- Advertising. It will be used not only to reinforce the low awareness of the WBL studies but also to secure approximately 30 new students annually assuming that its effectiveness will be similar to this of the previous two years’ campaigns. The programmes should be advertised during the September to December period for the coming three years. The main medium will be the Sunday’s newspapers and those of other days that include extended appointments sections.
- Public Relations. The Greek Centre should be updating and upgrading its brochure on a yearly basis. Press releases at no cost will be arranged to inform potential students about our programmes. A quarterly newsletter (January, June and September) is planned to start its circulation during the year 2002-03, while for the following year a web site in Greek will have to be developed and updated regularly. For the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 participation in the Education exhibition is proposed to further enhance our image and awareness as an educational institution.

- Direct mail. It delivered good results in the past as we managed to establish connections with two associations (Palso and Esma). The 2002-03 direct mail will target selected members (5000 and 1000 members respectively) of these two associations and members of the Middlesex University Alumni (600 members) who reside in Greece. In the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 similar activities – but at smaller scale - will be undertaken at targets, which will have been previously identified and evaluated. Every direct mail envelope will contain the brochure and a cover letter both enclosed in a folder.
- Presentations. A number of presentations made for the purpose of this project has managed to establish good links with a few insurance companies (e.g. Nationale Nederlanden). More presentations should be arranged within this or other industries (inclusive of the education area) with the objective to achieve solid results on the recruitment levels. Presentation is a highly effective promotional medium with no cost involved but high recruitment potential.

The effectiveness of the above activities (measured as their impact on the enrolment in relation to their cost) will be evaluated on a regular basis and the feedback will be used for potential improvements of the activity plan for the following year. Below, we have estimated the marketing expenditure level that is needed to execute the identified marketing strategy by taking into consideration the expenditure levels for similar activities undertaken in the past.

- Advertising cost. An amount of € 27,000 will be allocated to buy 60 insertions, which are expected to generate (taking into consideration the two previous years' performance) about 400 enquiries with an estimated number of 30 students to join the courses. The amount will increase to € 29,000 (to achieve the same student target for 2003-04) assuming that the unit advertising rates will go up by about 7% and to € 35,000 (with 40 new students target for 2004-05) taking into account the advertising rates increase and the need to buy additional insertions to introduce the new modified programmes. Cost of developing the advertisements, producing films for newspapers etc is expected to be approximately € 600, € 700, € 1000 respectively for the coming three years.
- New brochure cost. We will need to print approximately 7,000 brochures for the following year to cover all our marketing needs. The costs for development and printing (August

2002) should be approximately € 400 and € 4,600 respectively or about € 0.71 per piece. For the years 2003-04 and 2004-05, we anticipate to print about 5,500 brochures each year with cost of about € 4,400 (€ 0.80 unit cost) inclusive of development and printing. The total cost for printing 7,000 folders, envelopes and cover letters should be approximately € 3,000 for the coming year (€ 0.43 unit cost).

- Newsletter, web site, exhibition costs. There has been no data on costing these activities and therefore a very rough estimate only can be made. Design and printing cost (1000 pieces) for the newsletter should not exceed the amount of € 2,000 for 2002-03 (2 issues) and € 3,000 for 2003-04 and 2004-05 (3 issues each year). Designing our website is a rather costly exercise and an amount of about € 15,000 should be allocated to start with in 2003-04 but maintaining and updating this site is estimated to cost us not more than at € 2,000 for 2004-05. For the same period an amount of € 2,500 and € 3,000 for each year is allocated for participation in the exhibition for Education.
- Direct mail costs. Taking into account the above costing, it is calculated that a direct mail information pack (brochure + folder/envelope/cover letter + postage) will cost € 0.71 + € 0.43 + € 1.36 = € 2.50, for the coming year and about € 3.00 for the next two years. We assume that the advertising reply information pack will cost about the same, as the cost of the additional material it contains (application form, tuition fees) is very minimal.

Having estimated the unit costs for all our activities to be undertaken over the next three years, we may proceed with calculating the total annual expenses and projected revenues from tuition fees paid by students joining our courses as a result of all the above activities.

#### **IV. Budget**

It provides the guidelines for the funds that need to be allocated for the marketing strategy to be implemented. The budget may work as a profit-and-loss statement by showing the forecasted enrolment and expected revenue from one side and the marketing expenses to secure the above enrolment level from the other side. Table 13 presents this information per year for the coming three years and refers to the income Middlesex University will be receiving from the GCWBLP operations. The gross profit refers to the income to be received after deducting the marketing expenses from the tuition fees. Advising costs, administration

expenses etc are not taken into consideration. The three-year financial statement has been prepared by making the following assumptions:

- The tuition fees will remain at today's level for the coming three years. The average amount of € 6,500 (80 RAL credits) covers the vast majority of our MA students.
- We have included only MA students in our plan, as Master's has been the core programme of the GCWBLP. However, a small percentage (approximately 10%) of the annual new student numbers should be pursuing Bachelor's or Doctoral awards. In this case the total revenue should be less than the one in Table 13, as on an average basis a BA student contributes about € 5,000 per year and a DProf student only € 3,400 per year.
- We have assumed that all the new students will complete their MA courses and will fully pay their fees within a year. This is not that realistic as about 30% of our students complete their programme the following academic year after their admission. Assuming that the first year they pay about 70% of their fees, the total revenues in Table 13 should be less by about 10% for every year. However, if we take into consideration the number of continuing students (who still have to pay 30% of their fees), the total revenues should finally be at least at the levels indicated in Table 13.
- The new course to be introduced in 2004-05 will be priced higher (€ 8,500) than the current WBL programme and is estimated to attract about 30 students who will join as response to our advertisements (15 persons), PR activities (5) and our direct mail campaign (10).
- The advertising activity is estimated to generate approximately 400 enquiries every year by spending € 27,000 and € 29,000 during the next two years. The response will be eventually slowing down but the allocation of € 35,000 and introduction of new programmes for the 2004-05 is expected to keep the enquiries at the same level.
- A number of students will be joining every year as a result of the general publicity (word of mouth), marketing presentations (insurance companies etc) or from Cyprus. It is anticipated that the total student numbers should be in the range of 46, 65 and 90 for the following three academic years. There is no cost involved in those activities.

Table 13 shows that the budget (i.e. the total marketing expenses for advertising, PR and direct mail) will have to be approximately € 47,100 for the following year. The impact on the enrolment is expected to be very strong with 30 and 50 students joining our courses as a result of the advertising and direct mail campaigns respectively.

GCWBLP: THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL STATEMENT (€)			
	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Advertising costs			
Insertions	27,000	29,000	35,000
Development	600	700	1,000
Mail replies (400)	1,000	1,200	1,200
Cost A	28,600	30,900	37,200
Expected Students	30	30	45
Revenue			
At € 6,500 per student	195,000	195,000	195,000
At € 8,500 per student (15)	----	----	127,500
Revenue A	195,000	195,000	322,500
Public Relations costs			
Press releases	----	----	----
Newsletter	2,000	3,000	3,000
Web site	----	15,000	2,000
Exhibition	----	2,500	3,000
Cost B	2,000	20,500	8,000
Expected Students	----	20	20
Revenue			
At € 6,500 per student	----	130,000	97,500
At € 8,500 per student (5)	----	----	42,500
Revenue B	----	130,000	140,000
Direct Mail costs			
6600 pcs at € 2.50 each	16,500	----	----
5000 pcs at € 3.00 each	----	15,000	15,000
Cost C	16,500	15,000	15,000
Expected Students	50	45	45
Revenue			
At € 6,500 per student	325,000	292,500	227,500
At € 8,500 per student (10)	----	----	85,000
Revenue C	325,000	292,500	312,500
Total Costs (A+B+C)	47,100	66,400	60,200
Expected Students	80	95	110
Other Students (no cost)	46	65	90
Revenue D	299,000	422,500	585,000
Total Revenues (A+B+C+D)	819,000	1,040,000	1,360,000
Gross Profit (TR-TC)	771,900	973,600	1,299,800
Total Expected Students	126	160	200

Table 13 Three-year financial plan and enrolment objectives per promotional activity



The student recruitment numbers from activities that do not involve cost (general publicity etc) are realistic and have been emerged by taking into consideration past data and feedback received. For the 2002-03, the 20 students to join due to “word of mouth” (past graduates, advisors etc) is a realistic forecast based on the number of 21 students who were admitted in 2001-02. Interlife is also expected to contribute a small group between 11 to 20 students for each of the next three academic years. A group of 15 students-insurance agents (Nationale Nederlanden) is anticipated to be joining in 2002-03 as a result of the 2001-02 marketing presentations. The expectations for the following two years are for 25 and 40 students each year from presentations to educational providers and various corporations.

Analytically, the total defined new student objectives (Table 12) will be achieved after the various activities will accomplish their targets as shown in Table 14.

Academic year	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Advertising	30	30	45
Public Relations	---	20	20
Direct Mail	50	45	45
General Publicity	20	25	30
Presentations	15	25	40
Interlife	11	15	20
Total new students	126	160	200

Table 14 Student enrolment objectives per activity per year

## V. Control

The last section of the marketing plan is associated with the control to be used to monitor the plan’s progress. Objectives and budgets can be defined on quarter basis and corrective action should be taken if the objectives are not being met or budgets are being exceeded. In the case of GCWBLP, the response of the proposed advertising campaigns (September-October) should be closely monitored and corrective action (if necessary) will have to be taken early (e.g. November) to ensure that the annual enrolment number will be achieved. The three-year marketing plan should be revised annually after taking into consideration the effectiveness of every activity undertaken during the year just finished.

# 8

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 CONCLUSIONS

The Greek Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships and its unique Work Based Learning programmes have been going through a prolonged introductory stage of their institutional and product life cycle over the last two years. The euphoria due to the early (1998-9) success with the Interamerican partnership was eventually replaced by scepticism on how to achieve similar recruitment results the following years. The student admission numbers of the last two academic years were well below our expectations and the need for immediate action was becoming increasingly urgent. Obviously, the development of the Greek Centre can only be accomplished through a sustained long-term effort that concentrates on implementing an approved strategic marketing plan. The final product of my doctorate project is a marketing plan that aspires to take the Greek Centre a significant step forward and is addressed to the GCWBLP Academic and Commercial Directors who are the long-term policy makers for the Greek Centre.

The cornerstone of the determined attempt to attain constant growth rates for every organisation is the mission. My project has developed a clear mission for the Greek Centre that is commitment to providing opportunities of the highest quality for qualified working professionals to build academic qualifications based on learning from their jobs, interests or private study through the award winning philosophy of work based learning exclusively developed by Middlesex University. To guide its efforts, clear goals and objectives were identified in line with the above mission statement. The major goal was defined as the student

enrolment increase for the coming three years with the objective of reaching the level of 25 percentage points on a yearly basis for the registered student numbers. The expected growth will exclusively be based on the existing programmes for the following two years through undertaking intensified promotional activities within the existing markets (market penetration) or locating new markets (market development).

The foundation of every successful marketing plan is the accurate and complete identification of the prospective customer. The research conducted among 112 potential WBL students managed to put together a student profile of which nobody was aware before. The most interesting characteristic of our potential student has been their extensive professional work experience (about 10 years), which automatically established him/her as a postgraduate student-candidate. This information in association with the received feedback of the most common working fields enabled us to identify a few obvious target groups for the GCWBLP: potential MA students working in IT, sales/marketing, finance, psychology and banking.

Consequently, an obvious research result was that there is no significant market for undergraduate WBL courses. The fact that only two groups (12 students) of Bachelor's programmes commenced during the last two academic years indicates that the market is for postgraduate awards and basically for Master's courses. However, demand for Bachelor's programmes may be generated through establishing successful partnerships with educational providers as it is the case in the following example: Middlesex University in collaboration with Hong Kong University (SPACE) offers BA (Hons) in WBLS (Recreation and Sports Management). Holders of Hong Kong University (SPACE) Diploma in Sports and Recreation Management are exempted 180 credits.

The demand for Doctorate programmes seems to be higher than that for Bachelor's but state recognition is widely requested, thus remarkably decreasing the potential student number (actually only two students were admitted during the last two academic years and the estimate for the academic year 2002-03 is 8 students).

An indirect way to build recruitment numbers is the recommendation made by current or past satisfied students. Effective institutions strive to meet and exceed students' expectations and regularly survey students' satisfaction level. For the first time in the history of the Centre, a

past graduate survey was conducted and the results were very encouraging as 96% respondents felt that their expectations were met. This level of satisfied students explains the high percentage (38%) of students admitted to our programmes (2001-02) as a result of recommendation / general publicity. The survey also revealed a number of points for improvement (mainly books), the Centre has taken into account and a number of changes were implemented. Feedback from last year's graduates will evaluate the impact of those changes and provide guidance for further ones to be made if necessary. The above profile and satisfaction surveys will be on going exercises to allow the Centre to keep updating its prospective student profile and current student satisfaction level.

Having established potential target groups via student profiles and having determined high levels of quality service, the Centre had to identify ways to approach its prospective students. There were obviously two possibilities: The corporate route and the individual route. The first one was tested by approaching a highly representative sample of banking and insurance corporations. The recruitment expectations were quite high taking into consideration the previous success in Greece (Interamerican) and the established corporate partnerships in the United Kingdom. However, the survey undertaken among the training managers of the above organisations did not produce results to match those expectations.

The WBL perception was by far better by training managers working for insurance companies in comparison to this by training managers employed by banking corporations. Even in this case, only one insurance company has confirmed its intention to sponsor 15 students with effect from the academic year 2002-03. Good prospects were identified in another three cases but more discussions will have to be made before final decisions are made. On the contrary, the WBL concept did not receive overall positive perception by almost all the training managers of banking corporations, simply because the banks follow the conventional mode of study and their training programmes should be subject based. At the same time, the banking corporations did not seem keen to accredit their internal training courses through a tailor-made work based learning programme although it was conveyed to them that the added value is the knowledge production and improved expertise. It is highly unlikely that a bank will fund any of their employees for a WBL programme, unless there is a way this programme to provide specific knowledge that satisfies certain training needs in combination with the current WBL modules. The recent (September 2002) interest and discussions with Eurobank

for a programme that incorporates subject-based knowledge (management principles) for selected IT professionals, is a good indication for the demand of the WBL programmes by banking corporations. However, it should be mentioned that as most of the banks do recognise the WBL awards, an increasing number of bank employees will be willing to sponsor themselves to join our programmes on an individual basis.

A clear conclusion (maybe the most important one out of all the research findings) in terms of marketing the WBL programmes on corporate basis is the fact that the partnership concept is not possible to be applied in Greece the way it has been implemented in the UK. The British concept has been –in most cases- based on accreditation of corporate training courses, WBL programme customisation and serious employer's involvement. This model was emerged within a very conducive environment where the Government placed great importance upon lifelong learning and funded work based learning initiatives. These fundamentals boosted the Middlesex University efforts for establishing WBL programmes as a field of study and building a few partnerships. The environment is not conducive at all in Greece, as there is no lifelong learning policy and –worse- not state recognition for WBL awards, with universities enjoying conventional roles that are not related to continuous professional development. Work based learning is extensively perceived only as a mode of study, while in UK as both a field as well as mode of study. The partnership concept in the Greek market can only be established through prior learning recognition on individual basis and programme customisation with special training courses to be incorporated.

Despite the lack of government recognition and different perceptions in Greece, work based learning can still deliver its unique benefits to individuals and corporations. Individual learners recognise a WBL award as a personal achievement, which reinforces their project management and methodological skills. For companies, knowledge creation primarily through project activity, effective knowledge management, enhancement of intellectual capital and organisational learning are obvious benefits, which contribute towards achieving business benefits. In both cases, work based learning recognises bodies of knowledge that are outside the university and derived through the interdisciplinarity of work and articulate the accumulated tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

The comparable commercial success in Greece and in UK (taking into consideration the market sizes) of the WBL programmes proves the point that the WBL concept can still achieve high performance (measured by student recruitment numbers) outside UK although it is marketed with a different approach from the one for the British market. In any case, local conditions, needs and perceptions should be seriously considered before the marketing strategy is formed instead of applying the established UK strategy. For the Greek market, this strategy should target both the individual student and corporations for partnerships the way analysed above. It is definitely a strenuous exercise having to recruit individuals instead of large groups but the results are accumulated on a long-term basis via recommendations by past graduates to potential students (82% of our 1998-01 graduates commented that they would recommend our programmes, while 38% of the 2001-02 students were recommended by others). On top of that, an approach has also been identified to enable the Centre to recruit large group of students as well.

This approach has to do with marketing the WBL programmes to associations, professional bodies, federations, unions etc. and emerged following a successful direct mail campaign undertaken as part of the activity for this doctorate project. Marketing our programmes to associations has dual benefits: First, there is no competition with other educational institutions and second the potential is extremely high as these associations have large number of members. The most promising lead in this area has been the contact established with the Panhellenic Association of Foreign Languages School Owners (Palso). Following participation in a conference organised by a branch of this association, we have commenced discussions for a potential partnership in two areas: participation of their members in our courses and accreditation of their courses/certificates. While the former has raised high recruitment expectations, the latter seems to be quite difficult to bring results soon as it involves decision-making by high-ranking personnel in Greece and in the United Kingdom. After a series of discussions with the President of the association, it has been agreed that he will issue and circulate to the 42 regional Palso branches (associations) an endorsement letter for our programmes (by end of October 2002) that will enable us to market them more effectively to about 5,000 Palso members nationwide. We follow the same course of action with Esma (Association of Air Force Engineering School Graduates with at least 1,000 members) and results are expected really soon.

This specific marketing effort via the associations combines both the corporate and individual routes, simply because the president of the association agrees to endorse the WBL programmes and their benefits but the financial commitment is made by the members of the association. Recruitment from associations will be built through direct mail campaigns and presentations (if necessary) targeting at almost all the members of the associations with the endorsement letter by the head of the association providing a strong “selling” point.

A unique application of the work based learning as a framework of creative possibilities was identified in the case of partnerships with educational providers. WBL programmes in Cyprus and Hong Kong have achieved astonishing growth rates - as far as the student recruitment numbers are concerned - by applying this concept which incorporates taught knowledge (provided by another institution) that carries a predetermined number of credit points into a WBL programme. The Greek Centre should pursue this form of partnership that solve the problem of providing taught material and provide access to guaranteed client basis.

Apart from the direct mail campaigns to associations etc, another way to identify potential students to join the courses is advertising, which has been used over the last two years with significant success. We admitted 65 students to the courses who claimed that they became aware of WBL studies through the insertions in various newspapers. The advertising campaigns so far have provided valuable feedback in terms of the media mix (mainly Sunday and financial papers), timing (September to December) and budget (€ 25,000 to € 30,000) that will be taken into account to maximise the results for the campaigns to follow. Advertising does not only help to recruit students but also enables us to build relationships with the media, which in a number of cases in the past have published press releases for the programmes. During the period September – October 2002, we also had two articles on WBL studies published (Appendix 5) in the financial newspapers Imerisia (12/9/2002) and Naftemporiki (22/10/2002). We will continue this approach in the future with the objective to secure more space for press releases.

Offering a unique programme and identifying the student target group is not enough for the success of an institution as it must also inform consumers effectively and motivate them to take an interest in the institution and its programmes. Communication is extremely important and its main expression in the case of the Greek Centre has been only the marketing

publications (brochures). The first brochure since GCWBLP was established was designed and produced in August 2001. It was a significant step forward from the previous communicative tools (coloured photocopies of fact sheets) but it was an effort that still has plenty of room for improvement. This stemmed from the evaluation exercise we conducted after assessing brochures and overall informative packages received from 13 institutions by applying 17 equally weighted criteria. The evaluation results guided the revision of our brochure (August 2002), which is a task that has to be performed annually (along with the potential student profile and past graduate satisfaction surveys) to enable the Centre to maximise its communication effectiveness.

Communication effectiveness is very crucial for the success of a marketing activity, but market size is an equally important factor especially when an institution is taking steps to build enrolment. The conclusions from the market measurement and forecasting exercise were quite interesting: about 2,200 professionals were estimated to be attending postgraduate courses delivered in various modes (taught, distance learning etc) as of June 2002 and this number should be growing by at least 10% per annum. The Open University has been the dominant player (58%) in the market since its establishment in 1998 with the GCWBLP to account for about 4% of the market. However, the Greek Centre constitutes a market segment on its own as no other institution offers WBL studies today in Greece. It should be noted that some Universities (e.g. University of Sunderland) have tried to capitalise on the “work based” concept by promoting their M.B.A. programmes with claims such as: “Stay at work and use your experience to gain a Master’s degree” and “Work-based assessments”. We may experience in the near future (2-3 years) more intense use of “work based” claims by institutions, thus establishing a more competitive environment and affecting the marketing strategy of our programmes.

The results of the market segmentation analysis were not as good as those of the market measurement exercise as we could not determine one or more main groups to target with our programmes. This conclusion has been the platform for the marketing approach, which has been recommended for the GCWBLP, and it is discussed below along with other recommendations.



## 8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The marketing approach that GCWBLP will have to apply to improve its market share should be mass marketing. WBL programmes should not target only a particular group of companies or working professionals but they should try to reach every corporation and every eligible professional regardless of his/her age, profession, location, etc. This approach is in line with the programmes' characteristic that allows the student (or the training manager) to custom make their own (the company's employees') award title in any subject where substantial experiential learning has been acquired.

Successful marketing of the existing WBL programmes over the next three years will enable the Centre and the programme to progress to the growth stage of their institutional / product life cycle. However, as no product / service can be appealing to the consumers forever a new modified programme is recommended to be launched during the year 2004-05 to provide a "fresher" look to our programme portfolio. The developmental work for this programme's structure will have to start during the academic year 2003-04, but its concept should be based on the combination of both the accreditation of previous learning and the conventional mode of study. Some preliminary ideas of this knowledge based component are along the following lines.

It will be based on the subject areas of the 2002-03 students with most likely ones to be finance, sales/marketing, psychology, information technology and probably one or two more areas. The curriculum to be developed will have a certain degree of flexibility to reflect the preferences of the participants and will be delivered by the current team of advisers. One possible exception will be the subject of psychology for which a new adviser will have to be appointed. The delivery of the taught module will most likely take place towards the end of the academic year in the form of 20-30 hours seminars to be conducted either weekdays or weekends. The assessment mechanism will be an essay in the respective subject. A successful completed essay will be awarded a number of credits (e.g. 10 credits) through an accreditation panel to be held in Athens (the way the two seminar sessions for the BA programme of the Interamerican students were accredited before). We need to highlight again that all the above are thoughts at their initial stage as the main developmental work will be done during the following academic year.

The introduction of the new concept does not fully meet the mass marketing approach principle as certain number of subjects will not be taught simply because it does not make sense (from a commercial point of view) to teach 1-2 students in the subjects of arts/design or shipping. It is therefore understood that a number of participants will not be taken care of, which means that these people can only apply for a WBL programme the way it is conducted today. The idea behind the new concept is not to replace the WBL programmes the way they are offered today, but to cater for those who are interested in the WBL studies but do not finally apply due to lack of subject knowledge provision. This group of people has been significant in size, as the potential student profile survey revealed that one out of three eligible potential WBL students does not finally apply due to the lack of recognition and knowledge provision and the WBL Studies' perception in relation to the taught courses. At the same time the new "enhanced" programme will appeal to corporations (e.g. banks) that consider educational programmes only if theoretical knowledge is incorporated. In other words, the mass marketing approach will still be relevant to the WBL programmes in the future but it will not apply to the new enhanced concept which will cater for a number of subject areas only.

All the above recommendations will have to be taken into consideration on a mid-term basis, but before this, GCWBLP has immediately to proceed with the objective of achieving immediate recruitment results (as analysed in the Marketing Plan, 7.2) for the academic year 2002-03, in the following areas:

- **Advertising**

The advertising campaign ran during the period from early September 2002 to end October 2002 with the previous year's advertisement text slightly modified to increase its attractiveness. Analytically, the heading has incorporated titles such as: MA in Business Administration, MA in Psychology, MSc in Information Technology, MSc in Finance etc to enable the advertisement to receive instant recognition by people interested in these fields. It was believed that a potential student searching for a postgraduate award in any field is more likely to respond to an advertisement that advertises MA/MSc in this field rather than to an advertisement promoting MA/MSc in Work Based Learning Studies. However, we do highlight with capital letters in our text that work based learning is the field of study and that our programmes are in Work Based Learning Studies which is obviously an element in the

title of award. A weekly tracking exercise – which will provide feedback on whether the advertisement modification was successful or not - on the enquiries generated and conversion rates is currently underway. The feedback from the first phase of the campaign (55 insertions) will provide guidelines for the second phase to ensure that the overall target (30 students) is finally achieved. Apart from the two press releases already out, efforts are currently made for more editorials to be published to further raise the WBL awareness.

- **Communication**

The upgraded brochure (produced in August 2002 including information on the DProf programme and benefits for the employers from employees' participation in Master's programmes) should be evaluated with the objective to identify improvements if necessary.

- **Direct Mail**

It has been the activity with the highest recruitment potential due to its massive nature (6,600 letters) for the three groups to be immediately targeted (Palso and Esma members and Middlesex University alumni based in Greece). The direct mail activities are expected to be completed by the end of 2002.

- **Public Relations**

Main priority in this area should be the introduction of a quarterly newsletter to reinforce the Centre's image by providing information and news from its operations. Developmental work for the first issue of the newsletter (due out early 2003) will have to take place at the same time with the establishment of the Greek Centre alumni, which is one of the obvious recipients of this newsletter. Alumni gatherings will be an excellent opportunity to promote the programmes to publics related to the alumni (friends, colleagues etc).

Apart from the above areas that constitute the immediate priorities for the Centre, work has also to be continued in the following areas to allow results to be achieved soon.

- **Corporate Partners**

One of the most important conclusions of this study is the partnership possibility with educational providers that has produced beneficial results in the case of the National Centre (UK), the Centre in Hong Kong and in Cyprus. This partnership concept not only provides a

unique application of the WBL (beyond the mechanistic approach as a course) but it also solves the problem of taught knowledge incorporation (as it is provided by another institution). However, the state recognition issue remains unresolved even if our partner is a public institution as Middlesex University will still be issuing the awards. The Greek Centre should immediately attempt to search for educational providers and assess the partnership potential with them. A potential success may also rebuild the interest in undergraduate courses as the educational providers (through their taught courses) can provide up to 2 / 3 of the total number of credits required.

We should proceed with further discussions with Eurobank (following the first encouraging presentation in September 2002) with the objective of designing a custom-made programme that will cater for their employees' educational needs. The estimated student number from this organisation is in the range of 10 to 15 professionals and – if successful - the programmes should start early 2003. A second approach will have to be made to the insurance companies, which have left some possibilities open for future partnership, while more presentations should be arranged to companies in industries other than banking and insurance.

An alternative way of introducing WBL programmes to corporations has to do with programme customisation in which the research project module is the main component of the programme while RAL plays a minor role or it can be taken completely out of the programme. This approach, which needs further exploration in terms of its success potential, improves the participants' work based research and project management capabilities, provides the company with a significant in-house research and development capacity, reinforces the knowledge creation and enhances the intellectual capital of an organisation. These strong points provide direct benefit to the corporation which does not need to finance part of the programme (RAL) that is associated with the individual's prior experiential learning and provides no obvious benefit to the organisation.

As the corporate perception of the WBL programmes was found to be of average level, we should focus on associations, institutes and etc the members of which will largely benefit (e.g. acquiring professional rights by becoming members in respective British associations) from our programmes. A way to identify corporate partners is through contacts from our previous

students who work for the target organisations as a company can be more receptive to our proposals if one of its employees has participated in the programmes before.

A company that has shown high partnership potential is the insurance company Interlife of Cyprus (associate of Interamerican of Greece) with 17 students having participated in the programmes over the last two academic years. Their large clientele base, wide network of branches and agents around the island and recent awareness established by the full page press advertisement (on WBL philosophy, benefits and featuring photos of the first graduates) have created an ideal platform for the company to further increase WBL awareness. This company's strong points along with the common characteristics of the Greek and Cypriot market (same language, similar educational systems, the fact that a few Greek companies have branches in Cyprus and vice versa etc) establish a conducive environment within which Interlife is able to build remarkable student recruitment numbers (in the range of 15-20 annually).

However, it is known that Interlife's full time business is the promotion of insurance services and not of WBL programmes. This obviously means that Interlife cannot be the platform for work based learning programmes to reach their full potential in Cyprus. We are also aware that the National Centre is already very active there with 116 students and established institutional partners. Taking the above into consideration, it is recommended that the Greek Centre should provide support (academic, administrative and business development) and encourage any Interlife's initiatives for further development of the WBL programmes in Cyprus within the context of Interlife's wide network of business contacts.

#### ▪ **Programme recognition**

Although it is not expected to be resolved in the near future, we should continue our efforts to get the courses recognised through the government's official body (Dikatsa). The Greek Centre should appeal against the expected negative answer to the application for recognition made recently by a group of our past graduates and it should follow up and take action accordingly till a positive answer is finally reached. State recognition will not only improve recruitment for Bachelor's and Master's courses, but it will also contribute remarkably towards the successful marketing of DProf programmes, for which state recognition is very

crucial as most of the candidates are educators who work for public post-secondary and further education institutions.

The Greek Centre should move forward by taking into serious consideration the above recommendations, which have originated from the three-year marketing plan. The Centre should apply the identified marketing strategy and implement the marketing plan to achieve its goals and objectives. The marketing performance will be closely monitored to ensure that objectives are being met within the specified budget and time parameters. The achievement of the recruitment objectives will enable the GCWBLP to reach its strategic organisational development aim and it will provide valuable feedback to other WBL Partnership Centres for the development of their strategic plans.

### 8.3 ACTION POINTS AND POSSIBILITIES OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Each of the above-identified areas should be translated into appropriate actions with one or more action steps necessary to be taken immediately or on a medium term basis. A summary of immediate action points (action to be completed by mid December 2002) is presented below:

- Evaluate the advertising campaign (September - October 2002) effectiveness in relation to the student recruitment target.
- Prepare the second phase of the advertising campaign according to the above evaluation.
- Complete direct mail activities for Palso and Esma members.
- Develop the layout for the first issue of the newsletter due early 2003.
- Identify educational providers as potential partners and arrange presentations on WBL programmes.
- Evaluate Interlife's performance in relation to the identified annual student recruitment target (11 students).
- Discuss with Eurobank about the customisation of the programme that meets their organisational needs.

The list of key action points for action to be completed by end June 2003 is the following:

- Evaluate the recently produced brochure and identify points for improvement.

- Identify corporations and associations and arrange presentations on WBL programmes.
- Continue efforts to ensure that the programmes are fully recognised by the State.

This document provides the necessary details of the Greek Centre development strategy, which is addressed to its Academic and Commercial Directors and to Middlesex University. The implementation of the marketing plan makes an impact by adding new dimensions and methods (i.e. direct mail to various association members) to existing knowledge of marketing higher education.

The completion of this doctoral project has also made a personal impact by advancing my own theoretical knowledge in the area of strategic marketing management, escalating my own professional capabilities to an advanced level, increasing my professional role understanding and becoming an authority in the strategic development area.

This project can be a basis for further research within the Greek market. Two vital points are:

- Knowledge provision through taught subject modules which are part of an “enhanced” WBL programme as per the proposed concept for introduction in 2004-05.
- WBL promotion to corporations by a project-driven approach whereby the research project and not Recognition and Accreditation of Learning becomes the key component of the programme.

This study has also raised a number of broad and very crucial issues regarding the perspectives of work based learning (section 2.5) within the higher education context. According to Portwood and Costley (2000) further work is necessary for the formulation of an ideology that “will persuade the various parties (state, universities and companies) that work based learning has a significant contribution to make to socio-economic concerns and the ethos and role of higher education”. Indeed, this is an urgent task and the completion of which will significantly contribute towards enhancing the credibility of work based learning and its continuous operation within the context of higher education systems internationally.

*Word count: 61,723*

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# A P P E N D I C E S



# **APPENDIX 1**

## **SURVEY FORMS**

**APPENDIX 1A**  
**POTENTIAL WBL STUDENT PROFILE FORM**  
**SURVEY PARTICIPANTS: 112**

# POTENTIAL WBL STUDENT PROFILE FORM

1. DATE: .....

2. NAME: ..... SEX: M / F

3. AGE GROUP

25-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ 40+ ☐

4. EDUCATION

BA ☐ TEI ☐ OTHER:.....  
SPECIALTY:.....

5. EXPERIENCE (YEARS)

3-5 ☐ 6-8 ☐ 9-11 ☐ 12+ ☐

6. INDUSTRY

BANKING

SALES&MKTG

EDUCATION

INSURANCE


ENGINEERING

FINANCE

SOCIAL SCIENCES

OTHERS


REMARKS:.....

7. WBLS RECOGNITION

VERY IMPORTANT

IMPORTANT

NOT IMPORTANT


8. SOURCE OF INFO ABOUT WBLS

PRESS

WBL STUDENT


OTHER: .....

9. FINAL DECISION: Y / N

10. REMARKS:.....

**APPENDIX 1B**  
WBL STUDIES GRADUATES' FEEDBACK FORM  
SURVEY RESPONDENTS: 56

# WBL STUDIES GRADUATES' FEEDBACK FORM

1. Year of graduation.

1998  1999  2000  2001

2. Area of expertise/industry.

Insurance Services	<input type="text"/>	Accounting/Finance	<input type="text"/>	Marketing	<input type="text"/>
Sales Management	<input type="text"/>	IT	<input type="text"/>	Engineering	<input type="text"/>
Banking	<input type="text"/>	Psychology	<input type="text"/>	Human Resources	<input type="text"/>

Others, please specify:.....

3. Level of course materials.

Module 4801	Poor	<input type="text"/>	Adequate	<input type="text"/>	Good	<input type="text"/>	Excellent	<input type="text"/>
Module 4810	Poor	<input type="text"/>	Adequate	<input type="text"/>	Good	<input type="text"/>	Excellent	<input type="text"/>
Module 4825	Poor	<input type="text"/>	Adequate	<input type="text"/>	Good	<input type="text"/>	Excellent	<input type="text"/>
Module 4840/60	Poor	<input type="text"/>	Adequate	<input type="text"/>	Good	<input type="text"/>	Excellent	<input type="text"/>

4. Level of tutor support for modules 4801/10/25 in the classroom.

Poor  Adequate  Good  Excellent

5. Level of personal advisor support for the final project.

Poor  Adequate  Good  Excellent

6. Do you agree that after completing your studies your productivity has increased through reinforcing existing knowledge and experience?

Strongly agree	<input type="text"/>	Disagree	<input type="text"/>	Undecided	<input type="text"/>
Agree	<input type="text"/>	Strongly disagree	<input type="text"/>		

7. Did your degree help you in your career advancement/development?

Yes  No

8. Did the programme match your initial expectations?

Yes  No

9. Would you recommend a WBL degree to someone else?

Very likely	<input type="text"/>	Unlikely	<input type="text"/>	Undecided	<input type="text"/>
Likely	<input type="text"/>	Very unlikely	<input type="text"/>		

10. Do you think that improvements should be made to the currently provided programmes, books, supervision etc?

Yes  No

If yes, please specify: .....

11. Other comments: .....

.....

**APPENDIX 1C**  
WBLS' CORPORATE PERCEPTION  
& PENETRATION FORM  
SURVEY PARTICIPANTS: 43

# WBL'S CORPORATE PERCEPTION & PENETRATION FORM

1. Date: .....
2. Company's name: .....
3. Manager's name: .....
4. Designation: .....

5. Number of employees:

<500

501-1000

>1001

6. Type of training provided:

In-House

External

Remarks: .....

7. Areas of training required:

New Products

Sales & Marketing

Others

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

IT-Software

IT-Internet

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

Remarks: .....

8. Main criterion for selection of training programmes:

Company's needs

Trainees' needs

Others

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

Duration

Cost

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

Remarks: .....

9. Have you heard of WBL studies before?

Yes

No

---If not, a short brief follows---

10. If yes, what was the source of information?

Press

Other

Please specify: .....

11. Do you agree that WBL studies create knowledge of direct value for your organisation?

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Undecided


Disagree  
Strongly disagree


12. Do you agree that WBL studies increase the organisation's intellectual capital?

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Undecided


Disagree  
Strongly disagree


13. Do you agree that the employee's productivity increases through engaging in R&D activities and reinforcing existing knowledge and experience?

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Undecided


Disagree  
Strongly disagree


14. Do you agree that the WBL is an improvement on the currently available educational programmes?

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Undecided


Disagree  
Strongly disagree


15. Would you recommend to your organisation a WBL course for sponsoring?

Very likely  
Likely  
Undecided


Unlikely  
Highly unlikely


16. Would you like to have another presentation/discussion in the future?

Yes

--

No

--

If yes, please specify the time: .....

17. Remarks:

.....  
.....  
.....



**APPENDIX 1D**  
**CORPORATE PRESENTATIONS’**  
**FEEDBACK FORM - UK**  
**SURVEY PARTICIPANTS: 4**

# CORPORATE PRESENTATIONS' FEEDBACK FORM - UK

Date:.....

1. Please indicate number of corporations to which presentations were made during the last 12 months:

2. Corporations' profile. Please give breakdown of the above number per sector & industry:

a. Sector

Public

Private

b. Industry

Education

Finance

Construction

Marketing

Other industry:

--	--	--	--	--	--

3. Average number of people usually attending the presentations:

<3

3-5

>6

4. If presentations were made to senior managers, their designations were usually:

Managing Directors

Training Managers

HR Managers

Others, please specify: .....

5. Usual mode of presentations:

Transparencies

Slides

Leaflets

Others, please specify: .....

6. Number of corporations from which students were actually recruited:

7. Total number of students recruited from the above corporations:

8. Number of corporations students are likely to be recruited from in the future:

Any comments: .....

9. Average ~~period required for~~ a corporation to confirm partnership:

<1month

1-3months

>3months

10. How did you identify the corporations to which presentations were made? Please indicate number per category:

Direct Mail

Past students contacts

Personal (NC) contacts

Others, please specify: .....

11. Please specify the name(s) of your colleagues they will be able to contribute in this survey.

Name: .....E-mail:.....Name:.....E-mail:.....

Thank you for the time you spent to fill in this questionnaire. If the space is not enough please use a separate sheet. Please return this form to S.Drossos@mdx.ac.uk.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**ADVERTORIAL ABOUT WBLs IN THE**  
**“ASFALISTIKI AGORA” MAGAZINE**  
**(DECEMBER 2001 / GREEK TEXT)**

★ (ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΗ)



**Τ**ο Middlesex University, ένα από τα μεγαλύτερα κρατικά Πανεπιστήμια στη Μ. Βρετανία, με περισσότερους από 25.000 φοιτητές από 100 διαφορετικές χώρες, είναι ένα από τα πλέον πρωτοποριακά Πανεπιστήμια στις αντιλήψεις περί μεθόδων διδασκαλίας και ειδικά στο χώρο της δια βίου εκπαίδευσης. Μια απλή και ταυτόχρονα, μεγαλειώδως υλοποιημένη ιδέα του Middlesex University είναι τα προγράμματα **Work Based Learning (WBL)**, δηλαδή σπουδές βάσει επαγγελματικής πείρας, που ξεκίνησαν το 1993 στην Αγγλία.

Το WBL είναι ένας μοντέρνος τρόπος σπουδών, πανεπιστημιακού επιπέδου, στο χώρο της εργασίας. Τα εξαιρετικά χαρακτηριστικά του επιτρέπουν τη μάθηση να πραγματοποιείται και να επικεντρώνεται στο αντικείμενο αλλά και κατά τη διάρκεια της εργασίας. Το Middlesex University δίνει με αυτόν τον τρόπο τη δυνατότητα στις επιχειρήσεις να βελτιώσουν την αποτελεσματικότητά τους και στα στελέχη τους την ευκαιρία για ακαδημαϊκές σπουδές, βασισμένες στο περιεχόμενο της εργασίας τους. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο τα στελέχη εξαντλούν τις εκπαιδευτικές τους δυνατότητες ενώ, ταυτόχρονα, συνεχίζουν την καριέρα τους.

Ο εργαζόμενος-φοιτητής του προγράμματος μπορεί να αποκτήσει τίτλο σπουδών όλων των επιπέδων (Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate), τον οποίο δημιουργεί ο ίδιος, σε αντίθεση με τα συμβατικά πανεπιστημιακά προγράμματα όπου η επιλογή πτυχίου γίνεται από συγκεκριμένη λίστα. Ο φοιτητής σπουδάζει με την ταχύτητα που του επιτρέπουν οι ρυθμοί ζωής και εργασίας του και αξιολογείται μέσω των εργασιών (portfolios, projects) και όχι με γραπτές εξετάσεις. Η μάθηση στηρίζεται στις συμβουλές και στην προσωπική καθοδήγηση πανεπιστημιακού συμβούλου σε όλη τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος.

Τα οφέλη των εργοδοτών είναι τεράστια, αφού τα στελέχη πραγματοποιούν μέσω των σπουδών τους projects έρευνας και ανάπτυξης για την επιχείρηση, βελτιώνουν την παραγωγικότητά τους, αναβαθμίζουν τις γνώσεις τους και, κατά συνέπεια, τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα της εταιρίας τους.

Αποδείξη του υψηλού κύρους και καταξίωσης των WBL σπουδών είναι τα βραβεία Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης «**Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education (1996 & 1998)**» για τα οφέλη που αποκόμισαν τα στελέχη που τις παρακολούθησαν. Στην Ελλάδα τα προγράμματα ξεκίνησαν το 1997 και ανάμεσα στους Έλληνες αποφοίτους συγκαταλέγονται στελέχη μεγάλων εταιριών, όπως η Coca Cola-3E, Interamerican, Manpower, Alpha Bank, Eurobank και πολλές άλλες.

## Bachelors και Masters βάσει επαγγελματικής πείρας



Trent Park University's Administration Center, London.

70 **ΑΓΟΡΑ**

About Middlesex University – WBL: Features, Benefits, Prize

## ΠΡΟΣΩΠΙΚΕΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΕΣ ΦΟΙΤΗΣΗΣ ΣΤΟ ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ «WORK BASED LEARNING»

Μπορεί, εν τέλει, ένα "βαρύ" επαγγελματικό πρόγραμμα να συνδυαστεί με τη διαρκή επιμόρφωση. Δύο διακεκριμένα στελέχη του ασφαλιστικού κλάδου καταθέτουν την προσωπική τους εμπειρία από την παρακολούθηση του προγράμματος.



Ο κ. **Τάσος Δανατζόπουλος**, Επιθεωρητής Πωλήσεων της Interamerican και κάτοχος πτυχίου **Master of Arts in Sales Management & Development**, μας μιλάει για την εμπειρία του από τις σπουδές του στο πρόγραμμα WBL του Middlesex University.

«Η Διεύθυνση Πωλήσεων της Interamerican, το 1998, με ενημέρωσε ότι είχα τη δυνατότητα να αποκτήσω ένα μεταπτυχιακό τίτλο σπουδών από το Middlesex University, βασισμένο στην πιστοποίηση γνώσεων και ικανοτήτων που είχα μέχρι τότε αποκτήσει στη δουλειά μου.

Επέλεξα να συμμετάσχω για πολλούς λόγους. Πρώτον, σίγουρα στο να κάνω την προσωπική μου αξιολόγηση και επαγγελματική αποτίμηση και να θέσω το μελλοντικό μου προγραμματισμό. Δεύτερον, επιθυμούσα να βελτιωθώ μέσω της εμπέδωσης διαδικασιών ερευνητικής μεθοδολογίας, οργάνωσης και καλύτερης ποιότητας της δουλειάς μου. Επίσης, ήθελα να πιστοποιήσω τις δεξιότητες και την επαγγελματική μου εμπειρία και να μετρήσω πρακτικά τις δυνατότητές μου στην ολοκλήρωση ενός σοβαρού project.

Θεωρώ ότι οι στόχοι αυτοί επιτεύχθηκαν πλήρως.

Η δυσκολία μου να κατανείμω τον χρόνο ήπια, περιορισμένο χρόνο μου στην προετοιμασία και την υποβολή της μελέτης, με βοήθησε στο να έχω μια πιο πειθαρχημένη προσπάθεια, μεγαλύτερη συνέπεια και διάκριση αποτελέσματος.

Στον αντίποδα, το κίνητρο, όπως προανέφερα, ήταν σημαντικό. Τελικά, βέβαια, η αναγνώριση της αποκτησης του Master, και μάλιστα με τη διακρίση του βραβείου Jerry Fowler, με έκαναν να αισθανθώ απόλυτα δικαιωμένος για την επιλογή μου».

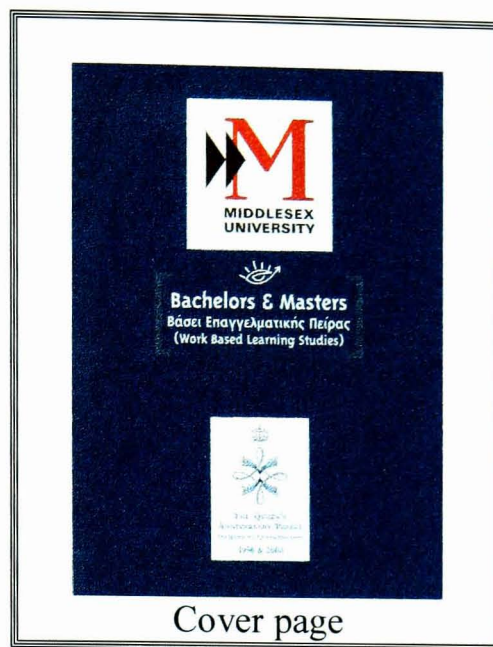


Ο κ. **Γιάννης Τζουκίδης**, Διευθυντής Υποκαταστήματος της Interamerican, είναι κάτοχος **Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration** από το Middlesex University. Πληροφορήθηκε σχετικά με την ύπαρξη των προγραμμάτων WBL μέσω της εταιρίας του, σε μια ειδική παρουσίαση που έγινε σχετικά με τα οφέλη και τις δυνατότητες που θα είχαν οι συμμετέχοντες. Δηλώνει ότι ο λόγος που συμμετείχε στο πρόγραμμα ήταν για να του δοθεί η δυνατότητα να πιστοποιήσει τις επαγγελματικές του γνώσεις, αλλά και να αποκτήσει νέες και ωφέλιμες για τη δουλειά του. Μας λέει σχετικά:

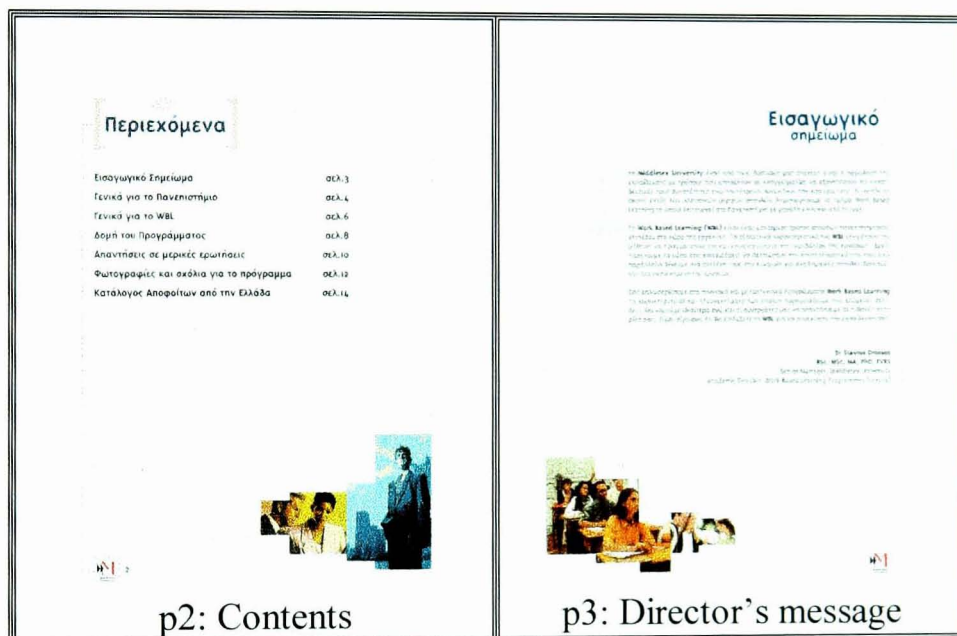
«Ο στόχος μου επιτεύχθηκε, αφού όχι μόνο απέκτησα μια βαθύτερη γνώση του Management αλλά και οι πρακτικές της εξέλιξής μου και της πορείας μου στο χώρο βελτιώθηκαν ουσιαστικά. Επίσης, παρόλο που η ενσωμάτωση των ακαδημαϊκών μου υποχρεώσεων στο ήδη φορτωμένο πρόγραμμά μου ήταν δύσκολη, απεικώθη ότι, σε ένα μεγαλύτερο βάθος χρόνου, η βελτίωση των επαγγελματικών μου αποτελεσμάτων θα δικαιώσει πλήρως την επιπλέον προσπάθειά μου».

**APPENDIX 3**  
GCWBLP BROCHURE ON WBL PROGRAMMES  
(AUGUST 2001 / GREEK TEXT)





Cover page



p2: Contents

p3: Director's message



pp4-5: About Middlesex University



[illegible]

Το κενό που δημιουργείται από την απουσία των εργαζομένων μπορεί να καλυφθεί με διάφορους τρόπους. Ορισμένοι εργοδότες προτιμούν να πληρώσουν για την εργασία των εργαζομένων που απουσιάζουν, ενώ άλλοι προτιμούν να μην πληρώσουν καθόλου. Ορισμένοι εργοδότες προτιμούν να πληρώσουν για την εργασία των εργαζομένων που απουσιάζουν, ενώ άλλοι προτιμούν να μην πληρώσουν καθόλου. Ορισμένοι εργοδότες προτιμούν να πληρώσουν για την εργασία των εργαζομένων που απουσιάζουν, ενώ άλλοι προτιμούν να μην πληρώσουν καθόλου.

"Ο κάθε φοιτητής δημιουργεί τον δικό του τίτλο σπουδών - εξειδίκευσή" 

## pp6-7: About Work Based Learning

## M

Μεθοδολογία

 Kupio Project  
(Work Based Project)

pp8-9: Programme's structure

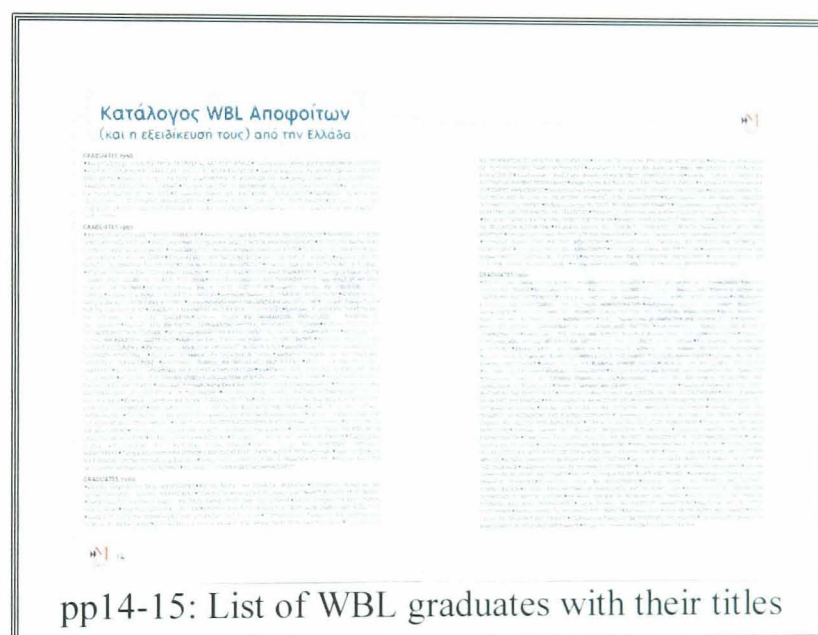
## 44

[illegible]

pp10-11: Frequently Asked Questions



pp12-13: Comments on WBL by past graduates



pp14-15: List of WBL graduates with their titles



**APPENDIX 4**  
**GCWBLP PRESS AD ON WBL PROGRAMMES**  
**(SEPTEMBER 2001 / GREEK TEXT)**



## BACHELOR'S & MASTER'S βάσει ΕΠΑΓΓΕΛΜΑΤΙΚΗΣ ΠΕΙΡΑΣ (WORK BASED LEARNING STUDIES)

Αξιοποίηση και πιστοποίηση της επαγγελματικής προϋπηρέτησης, για απόκτηση πανεπιστημιακού πτυχίου, με projects στο αντικείμενο της εργασίας.

Το **Middlesex University**, από τα μεγαλύτερα Δημόσια Βρετανικά Πανεπιστήμια, προσφέρει και στην Ελλάδα τα προγράμματα **Work Based Learning** που οδηγούν στην απόκτηση πτυχίων **BA, MA, MSc**, σε τομείς όπως Business, Banking, Insurance, Education, Engineering κ.α. με βασικά πλεονεκτήματα:

- **Αναγνώριση** και Πιστοποίηση προηγούμενης εμπειρίας και γνώσεων.
- Σχεδιασμός προγράμματος ανεξάρτητα για κάθε υποψήφιο (έναρξη και διάρκεια προγράμματος, διατριβή, τίτλος).
- Παρακολούθηση Προγράμματος στον χώρο εργασίας.
- Δίδακτρα που καταβάλλονται σε τακτά χρονικά διαστήματα απ'ευθείας στο πανεπιστήμιο.

Το Πανεπιστήμιο τιμήθηκε με το **Βραβείο Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης** στη Μ. Βρετανία για την "καινοτομία, υψηλή ποιότητα των προγραμμάτων **WBL**" και για τα οφέλη των υποψηφίων που τα παρακολούθησαν.

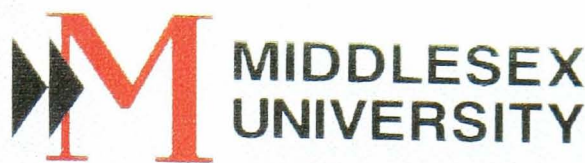
Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες τηλεφωνήστε  
στην κα Η. Armstrong στο 01-27 12 510  
Καποδιστρίου 102, Φιλοθέη, Αθήνα



WBL: Philosophy, Areas of Concentration, Benefits  
Newspaper & Magazine Ad (2000 – 20001)

**APPENDIX 5**  
**PRESS RELEASES ON WBL PROGRAMMES**  
**(2000-2002 / GREEK TEXT)**





Δρ. Γ. Σκουρδάρου

## Μια εκπαιδευτική πρόκληση

**Τ**ο Middlesex University στο Βόρειο Λονδίνο είναι από τα μεγαλύτερα δημόσια πανεπιστήμια της Μ. Βρετανίας με 24.000 φοιτητές και προγράμματα σπουδών σε όλους τους κλάδους, κατανεμημένα σε 8 μεγάλες σχολές, που καταλήγουν στην αποκτηση του πτυχίου Μπασσελντς (Bachelors) και μεταπτυχιακών Μαστερς, Διδακτορικού (Masters, Doctorate).

Το Middlesex University είναι ένα διεθνώς αναγνωρισμένο και αποτελεσματικό προσέγγιση φοιτητές από περίπου 100 χώρες κυρίως από την Ευρώπη, την Ασία, τις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες. Το μέλημά μας (students) διαρκούν από μερικούς μήνες (academic studies) έως απόλυτα επαγγελματικά με το άμεσο ή με το μεσοπρόθεσμο Συστήμα Μεταφορμικών Μονάδων Αναλυτικής Εκπαίδευσης (ECTS) που εφαρμόζεται ανάμεσα σε δημόσια πανεπιστήμια.

Το εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα είναι δομημένο με βάση την επικοινωνία και απευθύνεται σε όλες τις ηλικίες. Αυτό επιτρέπει το 75% των σπουδών να πραγματοποιούνται με βάση το Συστήμα Μεταφορμικών Μονάδων Αναλυτικής Εκπαίδευσης (ECTS) που εφαρμόζεται ανάμεσα σε δημόσια πανεπιστήμια.

Το εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα είναι δομημένο με βάση την επικοινωνία και απευθύνεται σε όλες τις ηλικίες. Αυτό επιτρέπει το 75% των σπουδών να πραγματοποιούνται με βάση το Συστήμα Μεταφορμικών Μονάδων Αναλυτικής Εκπαίδευσης (ECTS) που εφαρμόζεται ανάμεσα σε δημόσια πανεπιστήμια.

Η Middlesex University είναι ένα από τα μεγαλύτερα πανεπιστήμια της Βρετανίας που έχει κερδίσει το 1996 (Queen's Award for Higher Education) για το αριστείο επιτευγμάτων και αποτελεί από τα καλύτερα για Work Based Learning.

Οι μέθοδοι στήριξης των εκπαιδευτικών είναι δομημένες στο πλαίσιο ενός δυναμικού και αλληλεπιδρώντος συστήματος συνεργασίας με τα πανεπιστήμια και την εργασία (όπως είναι η Ανάπτυξη και Ενδυνάμωση του Προσωπικού και Βασική Εργασία Mathons (MWB)) και αποσκοπεί στην απόκτηση εκπαιδευτικών, επαγγελματιών, κλπ. Η Middlesex University είναι ένα από τα καλύτερα πανεπιστήμια της Βρετανίας που έχει κερδίσει το 1996 (Queen's Award for Higher Education) για το αριστείο επιτευγμάτων και αποτελεί από τα καλύτερα για Work Based Learning.

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About Middlesex University – WBL: Features, Modules  
INTERAMERICANnet Magazine – March/April 2000

Κατά τον χρόνο λειτουργίας του Έργου Βασισμένου στην Εργασία (ή Διπλώματος) - Work Based Project, του οποίου η προεργασία καθορίζεται από τους σπουδαστές του προγράμματος δίνοντας τους τον κάθε υποψήφιο, απαιτείται συνήθως να ολοκληρωθεί με αξιολογούμενη μεγάλη μελέτη ή δύο ή και τρεις μικρότερες δια μέσου των προεργασιών διαπιστώνονται εργασιακά επίπεδα κάθε σπουδαστή, οι υποψήφιοι αναπτύσσονται επί μέρους προβλήματα με προσωπική ή/και ομαδική εργασία, ώστε να αποκτήσουν να είναι έτοιμοι για τους ιδίους αλλά και για τον εργοδότη.

Συνήθως, διατηρείται η γραμμή μεταξύ της θεωρίας και της ανάλυσης των εργασιών των σπουδαστών και το βάθος των προεργασιών τους και της ανάλυσης των εργασιών. Στο πρόγραμμα υπάρχουν επίσης, ως αμετάκλητο μέρος, προαπαιτούμενα πιστοποιητικά σπουδών που δίδονται καθημερινά στο Πανεπιστήμιο (στον χώρο της εργασίας) ή επαγγελματικά απολυτήρια προγράμματα ή δοσμένα κάθε προεργασία Work Based Learning καθορίζονται από το Πανεπιστήμιο που απευθύνεται στην τεχνολογία. Η συνήθης διάρκεια για τις διαπαισεις είναι 18-24 μήνες και για το Masters 18-24 μήνες.

## Η εμπειρία με την INTERAMERICAN

Η συνεργασία με την INTERAMERICAN ξεκίνησε τον Μάρτιο 1998, αφού προσηγήθηκαν οι σχέσεις μεταξύ του Πανεπιστημίου (κ. Στ. Δρόσος) και της Τεχνικής Διεύθυνσης Πληθυσμών του Ομίλου (κ. Γ. Φωρρός και κ. Β. Σίφορα) υπό το Τμήμα Εκπαίδευσης. Η αρχική ιδέα ήταν να ενημερωθούν τα στελέχη - συνεργάτες της εταιρίας να αποκτήσουν εφόδους την πιο ολοκληρωτική εξέταση των εργασιών τους σίτισης, αλλά και να εμψυχώσουν για τη σκληρή δουλειά τους και τα αποτελέσματα από τη δύναμη της συνεργασίας τους με τον Όμιλο INTERAMERICAN διακαταμένα οι στόχοι για τους συμμετέχοντες είναι:

- Βελτίωση επιπέδου υπηρεσιών.
- Αύξηση παραγωγικότητας.
- Αναβάθμιση εικόνας χρηματοοικονομικού συμβούλου.
- Αύξηση γνώσεων και ικανοτήτων.
- Απόκτηση πτυχίου στον χώρο της εργασίας.

Το κριτήριο επιλογής των υποψηφίων στο πρόγραμμα Bachelors/Masters είναι:

- Το πρόγραμμα LUTC της εταιρίας ή εφάμιλλη εκπαίδευση (πτυχίο στην περίπτωση του Masters).
- 3 έτη minimum προϋπηρεσίας στην εταιρία (επαγγελματική πείρα).
- Κριτήρια της εταιρίας (οικονομικά/παραγωγής κ.α.).
- Κριτήρια Πανεπιστημίου (συνέντευξη για προσδιορισμό καταλληλότητας).

Τα πρώτα 29 στελέχη που πήραν μέρος στο πρόγραμμα Masters το 1998 ολοκλήρωσαν τις σπουδές τους με πτυχίο και έλαβαν το πτυχίο τους τον Ιούλιο του 1999 (ή ακριβώς του το επέλεξαν θα το λάβουν τον Ιούλιο 2000) στο Λονδίνο. Η συνεργασία με τον Όμιλο συνεχίζεται με 62 συνεργάτες του παρακολουθούν το πρόγραμμα Bachelors από τον Ιούλιο 1999, καθώς και 9 επιπλέον Πτυχιούχους (Γενική Διεύθυνση Πληθυσμών) που παρακολουθούν το πρόγραμμα Masters από τον Σεπτέμβριο 1999. Όλοι οι υπάλληλοι υποψήφιοι βρίσκονται στο τελικό στάδιο του προγράμματος που είναι η διατριβή τους ή οι διατριβές τους (Work Based Projects).

Οι εργαζόμενοι έχουν την ίδια εμπειρία των εκπαιδευτικών από το Τμήμα Εκπαίδευσης της Διεύθυνσης Πληθυσμών, οι οποίοι είναι υπεύθυνοι της INTERAMERICAN υπηρεσιών ως εξής αντιστοίχηση:

- Ομάδα από το πρόγραμμα
- Κεντρική και περιφερειακή λειτουργία, μελέτη.
- Αποστολή και μελλοντικές προεργασίες.
- Μεθοδολογία έρευνας.
- Αποστολή μεγαλύτερης πείρας ως μέλη των ομάδων.
- Κατάσταση φροντίδας ή έκτακτης ανάγκης.
- Μπορεί να εξυπηρετήσει τους πελάτες κλίμακα.
- Κατάλληλο ή όχι να παρακολουθεί, γράφει, και παρουσιάζει, είναι το συνηθισμένο.
- ΝΑΙ, χωρίς καμία κριτική.
- ΝΑΙ, διότι έχουμε αποκτήσει την εμπειρία της διαχείρισης.

Η τα σίταλη της INTERAMERICAN στοχεύει να αποκτήσει από την εμπειρία μας κατά τη διάρκεια της συνεργασίας μαζί τους. Θα θέλαμε να έχουμε σε συνεργασία από αποδοτικότητα, εργασία μεθόδε και να τους δώσουμε πιστεύω στη δουλειά τους και να τους δώσουμε κίνητρο και επιτυχίες τους στον Όμιλο. Ελπίζουμε να είναι και οι μερικοί υπεύθυνοι να αποκτήσουν τη γνώση και τα οποία μας εγγράφουν στην υπηρεσία. Εξέλιξη από το Πανεπιστήμιο τους, καθώς και από τη δική μας στο πρόγραμμά τους, καθώς και στην ενίσχυση τους στην INTERAMERICAN.

Περισσότερες πληροφορίες για το πρόγραμμα στο πλαίσιο μας με την INTERAMERICAN μπορείτε να βρείτε στην Βιολεττα Σίφορα, Τμήμα Εκπαίδευσης της Διεύθυνσης Πληθυσμών του Ομίλου, στο τηλ. κ. Έλενα Αρροστρόνγκ, χρηματικό κέντρο της εταιρίας που είναι το Πανεπιστήμιο, στο τηλέφωνο (01) 27.12.510.

Όχι, Στέφανος Δρόσος, Διευθυντής του Τμήματος Εκπαίδευσης της Διεύθυνσης Πληθυσμών του Ομίλου, στο Πανεπιστήμιο Middlesex, 7η οδό 3 Οφθαλμολογίας.



# Ακαδημαϊκές σπουδές κατ' οίκον... και εργασία

της ΕΛΕΝΗΣ ΣΙΑΤΡΑ

Ένα από τα βασικότερα προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίζει ο εργαζόμενος, είναι η απόκτηση ενός τίτλου σπουδών, ενώ παράλληλα εργάζεται. Ένας τίτλος που θα του δώσει κύρος στον εργασιακό του χώρο, και, παράλληλα, τη δυνατότητα να εξελιχθεί μέσα σε αυτόν.

Ο χρόνος που απαιτείται για την υλοποίηση ενός πτυχίου ή μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου, τόσο σε διάβασμα όσο και σε παρουσίες στο χώρο του πανεπιστημίου, κάνουν αυτό τις περισσότερες φορές «όνειρο» απραγματοποίητο.

Ένας νέος τρόπος σπουδών, το Work Based Learning στηρίζεται στην αρχή ότι η μάθηση αναπτύσσεται μέσα από όλες τις περιοχές της ανθρώπινης δράσης και όχι μόνο από την αβυσσική διδασκαλία, αναγνωρίζοντας την επαγγελματική αλλά και την ηθική εμπειρία του εργαζομένου, δίνοντάς του τη δυνατότητα να αποκτήσει ακαδημαϊκούς τίτλους σπουδών βασισμένους στη μάθηση από την εργασία του. Τα



Ο κ. Σταύρος Δράκος, καθηγητής και Director του προγράμματος Work Based Learning Partnerships του Βρετανικού Δημοσίου Πανεπιστημίου Middlesex.

πρόσβαση του, οι οποίες μπορούν να αναγνωριστούν από το Middlesex, να βαθμολογηθούν και αξιοποιηθούν στην απόκτηση ενός πτυχίου.

## Η προϋπηρεσία

«Υπάρχει ένα κατώτατο όριο προϋπηρεσίας, σύμφωνα με το οποίο ο εργαζόμενος αποκτά το δικαίωμα συμμετοχής στο πρόγραμμα. Έτσι, για έναν κάτοχο πτυχίου απαιτείται το λιγότερο προϋπηρεσία τεσσάρων ετών για απόκτηση μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου, ενώ για έναν εργαζο-

μενο χωρίς πτυχίο το λιγότερο τρία χρόνια για την απόκτηση του πρώτου του πτυχίου. Η προϋπηρεσία βοηθάει το πανεπιστήμιο να μετρήσει να μετρήσει την πείρα και τις γνώσεις που έχει αποκτήσει ο ενδιαφερόμενος από την εργασία του και να τις πιστοποιήσει», αναφέρει ο δρ Δράκος. Έτσι ο εργαζόμενος μπορεί να αξιοποιήσει την προϋπηρεσία του και βάσει αυτής να προχωρήσει στην υλοποίηση του στόχου του, για την απόκτηση ενός τίτλου σπουδών.

Σημειώνεται ότι κατά ένα ποσοστό 80% οι εργοδότες συμμετέχουν οικονομικά στο πρόγραμμα, ενώ ένα σημαντικό πλεονέκτημα που έχουν είναι ότι η διατήρηση που επιλέγει ο εργαζόμενος δεν γίνεται πάνω σε κάποιο υποθετικό σενάριο, αλλά ένα υπαρκτό θέμα της εταιρείας, το οποίο μπορεί να το αξιοποιήσει προς όφελος της επιχείρησης ανά πάσα στιγμή.

Το πανεπιστήμιο, για να διευκολύνει τη συνεργασία του με οργανισμούς εταιρείες και ομάδες υποψηφίων με προγράμματα σπουδών Work Based Learning, άρχισε να δραστηριοποιείται και στη χώρα μας από το 1998 μέσω της ΕΛΛΟΠΣ Α.Ε. Μελετών & Ερευνών, αντιπροσωπεύοντας το Middlesex University στην Ελλάδα. Σημειώνεται ότι πρόσφατα η εν λόγω εταιρεία εξαγοράστηκε από την ΠΛΑΣΙΟ Computers AEBE, ενώ τα προγράμματα του πανεπιστημίου διευθύνονται από τον δρ Δράσο μέλος του ακαδημαϊκού προσωπικού του Βρετανικού Πανεπιστημίου.

οι εργαζόμενοι στα μυστήρια από την εργασία του, τα ενδιαφέροντά του ή την κατ' ιδίαν μελέτη. Με τη μέθοδο αυτή, ο κάθε εργαζόμενος που ενδιαφέρεται να εξελιχθεί στο χώρο εργασίας του, έχει τη δυνατότητα να αποκτήσει έναν τίτλο σπουδών σε επίπεδο πτυχίου και μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου.

Οι σπουδές γίνονται μέσω του National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships του Βρετανικού Δημοσίου Πανεπιστημίου Middlesex. Πρόκειται για το μοναδικό κέντρο στη Βρετανία παροχής τέτοιου είδους προγραμμάτων ανώτατης εκπαίδευσης που σχεδιάζονται είτε για ένα άτομο ξεχωριστά είτε σε συνεργασία με την εργοδοσία και τους εργαζομένους ενός οργανισμού ή εταιρείας για την εκπαίδευση του προσωπικού.

Σύμφωνα με τον δρ Σταύρο Δράσο, καθηγητή και Director του προγράμματος του Βρετανικού Πανεπιστημίου, δίνεται η δυνατότητα στον εργαζόμενο να αξιοποιήσει τις γνώσεις που έχει αποκομίσει από την προϋπ-

WBL: Philosophy, Selection criteria, Features, Benefits  
Kathimerini (Sunday) newspaper – 1 October 2000



### MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

Το Middlesex University, το δεύτερο μεγαλύτερο κρατικό βρετανικό πανεπιστήμιο στο Λονδίνο, δημιούργησε το 1993 το τμήμα Work Learning που αποτελεί μια μέθοδο σπουδών πανεπιστημιακού επιπέδου, με τη μάθηση να επικεντρώνεται στο αντικείμενο της εργασίας.

Στις σπουδές WBL (Work Based Learning) αναγνωρίζεται η επαγγελματική και άλλη προηγούμενη εμπειρία και παρέχεται η δυνατότητα σε κάθε ενδιαφερόμενο να αποκτήσει ακαδημαϊκούς τίτλους σπουδών (Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate) βασισμένους στη μάθηση από την εργασία του. Οι σπουδές γίνονται μέσω του National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships του πανεπιστημίου Middlesex. Το κάθε πρόγραμμα είναι μοναδικό, αφού ο κάθε φοιτητής δημιουργεί το δικό του τίτλο σπουδών με βάση την προηγούμενη εργασιακή του εμπειρία, αξιολογείται μέσω των εργασιών (portfolios, projects) και όχι με γραπτές εξετάσεις.

Τα οφέλη για τους εργοδότες είναι μεγάλα, καθώς τα στελέχη πραγματοποιούν Research & Development projects στο αντικείμενο εργασίας τους, ενώ παράλληλα αυξάνεται η παραγωγικότητα των στελεχών - γεγονός που οδηγεί στην αναβάθμιση τους, ενώ επιπλέον βελτιώνονται τα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα των επιχειρήσεων.

About Middlesex University- WBL: Philosophy, Features, Benefits  
Chrima (financial) magazine – September 2001

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

## **Προγράμματα WBL και στην Ελλάδα**

ΤΟ MIDDLESEX University, το δεύτερο μεγαλύτερο κρατικό βρετανικό πανεπιστήμιο στο Λονδίνο με περισσότερους από 22.000 φοιτητές από 100 διαφορετικές χώρες, δημιούργησε στην Αγγλία το 1993 το τμήμα Work Based Learning (WBL). Οι σπουδές WBL είναι ένας μοντέρνος τρόπος σπουδών πανεπιστημιακού επιπέδου που βασίζεται στην αρχή ότι η μάθηση αναπτύσσεται μέσα από όλες τις περιοχές της ανθρώπινης δράσης και όχι μόνο στην αίθουσα διδασκαλίας.

Το κάθε πρόγραμμα WBL είναι μοναδικό, αφού ο κάθε φοιτητής δημιουργεί το δικό του τίτλο με βάση την προηγούμενη εργασιακή του εμπειρία αντί να επιλέγει από συγκεκριμένη λίστα. Το Πανεπιστήμιο βραβεύτηκε με το «Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education» (1996 & 1998) για τα οφέλη που αποκόμισαν τα στελέχη που παρακολούθησαν τα προγράμματα WBL που από το 1997 διεξάγονται και στην Ελλάδα.

About Middlesex University- WBL: Philosophy, Features, Prize  
Kerdos (financial) newspaper – 18 September 2001

## Σπουδές Work Based Learning από το Middlesex University

Το Middlesex University, το δεύτερο μεγαλύτερο εκπαιδευτικό ίδρυμα στο Λονδίνο με περισσότερους από 24.000 φοιτητές, από 100 διαφορετικές χώρες, υπέρβη πρωτότυπο (από τις δεκαετίες 1980) στη δημιουργία της δικής της μέθοδου που δίνει την δυνατότητα να συνδυάζει καριέρα, σπουδές και επαγγελματικές υποχρεώσεις. Το 1983 το Πανεπιστήμιο δημιούργησε το τμήμα Work Based Learning (WBL) που είναι ένας μοντέρνος τρόπος σπουδών που επισημαίνει επιτεύγματα που επιπλέον την μέθοδο να επικεντρώνεται στο αντikeείμενο της εργασίας. Το Middlesex University εγκαινιάστηκε το 1987 στην Ελλάδα μία γραμμή για να διευκολύνει την συνεργασία του με εταιρείες και ομάδες επιχειρήσεων σχετικά με τα προγράμματα που σχετίζονται με λειτουργούν το Σχολείο WBL. Οι σπουδές WBL βασίζονται στην αρχή ότι η μέθοδο αναπτύσσεται μέσα από όλες τις περιοχές της ανθρώπινης δράσης και όχι μόνο στην αβανταδό διδασ-

καλία. Αναγνωρίζουμε την επανειλημμένη και άλλη προηγούμενη εμπειρία και παρέχουμε την δυνατότητα σε κάθε ενδοεργασιακό σπουδαστή (Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate) βελτιωμένους, στη μέθοδο από την εργασία του. Οι σπουδές WBL γίνονται μέσω του National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships του Πανεπιστημίου Middlesex, το μοναδικό κέντρο στη Μεγάλη Βρετανία που έχει 3.000 προγράμματα WBL που έχει βοηθήσει περισσότερους από 3.000 επαγγελματίες να αποκτήσουν ακαδημαϊκή αναγνώριση για τη μέθοδο τους. Το Εθνικό Κέντρο βοηθήθηκε με το «Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education» (1986 & 1998) για τη σπουδή που αποκόμισαν τα σπουδών που τις παρέχουν. Το κάθε πρόγραμμα WBL είναι μοναδικό αφού ο καθένας που δεν διδάσκει τίποτα σπουδών από κάποια άλλη αλλαγή μπορεί το δικό του πλάνο με βάση την προηγούμενη εμπειρία του

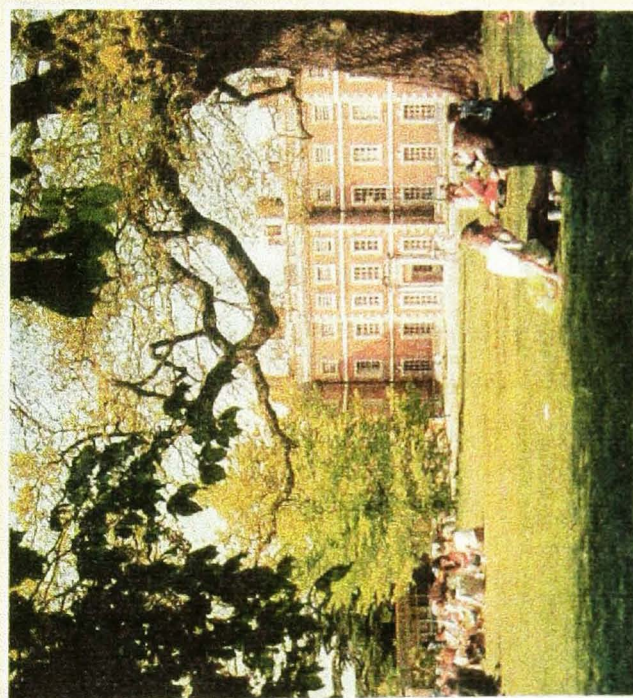
εμπειρία, αξιολογείται μέσω των εργασιών (portfolios, projects) και όχι με γραπτές εξετάσεις, στήριξη υποστήριξη από πανεπιστημιακό συμβούλιο σε όλα τα στάδια του προγράμματος και καταβάλλεται διδακτικό σταθμό.

Το σφύρι των εργασιών είναι τεράστιο αφού τα σπουδών προγραμμάτων projects τα αποτελέσματα των οποίων είναι μεγάλα, οριστική για την εταιρεία τους, σφύρι προγραμμάτων σπουδών μέσω αναγνώρισης και απόκτησης γνώσεων, σφύρι πνευματικού κεφαλαίου μέσω αναγνώρισης των επιχειρήσεων. Για να ενταχθεί κάποιος σε ένα μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα (που ολοκληρώνεται σε ένα διδακτικό έτος) θα πρέπει να έχει πρώτο πτυχίο με 5 χρόνια εργασιακής εμπειρίας (αν δεν υπάρχει πτυχίο) τουλάχιστον 8 χρόνια εργασιακής εμπειρίας. Ένα πρόγραμμα σπουδών γίνεται σε τρία χρονικά διαστήματα σε groups ή σε άτομα.

About Middlesex University- WBL: Philosophy, Features, Benefits  
Imiresia (financial) newspaper – 12 September 2002



# Σπουδές Work Based Learning από το Middlesex University



ΤΟ MIDDLESEX University, το δεύτερο μεγαλύτερο κρατικό βρετανικό πανεπιστήμιο στο Λονδίνο, με περισσότερους από 24.000 φοιτητές από 100 διαφορετικές χώρες, υπήρξε πρωτοπόρο (αρχές δεκαετίας '90) στη δημιουργία της δια βίου μάθησης, που δίνει τη δυνατότητα να συνδυαστεί καριέρα σπουδών και επαγγελματικές υποχρεώσεις. Το 1993, το πανεπιστήμιο δημιούργησε το τμήμα Work Based Learning (WBL), που είναι ένας

μοντέρνος τρόπος σπουδών πανεπιστημιακού επιπέδου, ο οποίος επιτρέπει τη μάθηση να επικεντρώνεται στο αντικείμενο της εργασίας. Το Middlesex University εγκατέστησε το 1997 στην Ελλάδα μια γραμματεία, για να διευκολύνει τη συνεργασία του με εταιρείες και ομάδες υποψηφίων σχετικά με τα προγράμματα που άρχισαν να λειτουργούν το Σεπτέμβριο 1997.

Οι σπουδές WBL βασίζονται στην αρχή ότι η μάθηση αναπτύσσεται μέσα από όλες τις περιοχές της ανθρώπινης δράσης και όχι μόνο στην αθροιστική διδασκαλία.

Το κάθε πρόγραμμα WBL είναι μοναδικό, αφού ο κάθε φοιτητής δεν διαλέγει τίτλο σπουδών από κάποια λίστα, αλλά δημιουργεί το δικό του τίτλο με βάση την προηγούμενη εργασιακή του εμπειρία, αξιολογείται μέσω των εργασιών (portfolios, projects) και όχι με γραπτές εξετάσεις, στηρίζεται προσωπικά από πανεπιστημιακό σύμβουλο σε όλη τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος και καταβάλλει τα διδάκτρα σταδιακά.

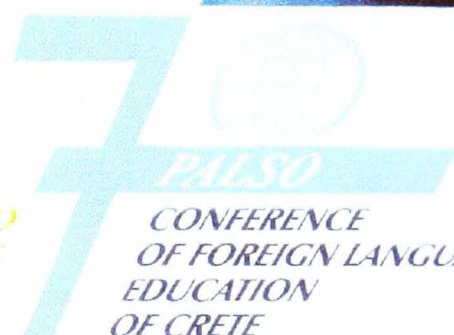
Η έναρξη προγραμμάτων γίνεται σε τακτά χρονικά διαστήματα σε groups 6-8 ατόμων.

About Middlesex University- WBL: Philosophy, Features, Benefits  
Naftemporiki (financial) newspaper – 22 October 2002

**APPENDIX 6**  
GCWBLP PARTICIPATION IN PALSO CONFERENCE  
(APRIL 2002)



ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ  
ΞΕΝΟΓΛΩΣΣΗΣ  
ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ  
ΚΡΗΤΗΣ



Εκ μέρους όλων των μελών  
των συλλόγων PALSO Κρήτης  
σας καλωσορίζουμε και ευχόμαστε  
να περάσετε ένα δημιουργικό  
και ευχάριστο διήμερο κοντά μας!

*On behalf of all our members  
we'd like to welcome you  
to Crete and wish you  
a creative and pleasant  
weekend here!*

**Η οργανωτική επιτροπή    The organising committee**

**Ηράκλειο**    Μαρία Αναστασάκη  
                 Μόνα Αμανατίδου  
                 Κατερίνα Σταυρακάκη  
                 Χρυσούλα Αποστολάκη

**Ρέθυμνο**    Αγγελική Δημητρούλια  
                 Σοφία Φραγκάκη

**Χανιά**        Ρομπινή Μετζίδακη  
                 Ελένη Βλαζάκη  
                 Αντώνης Καραπατάκης

**PALSO Conference: Foreign Languages Education-Lifelong Learning-IT  
6-7 April 2002, Crete**



*Sabbato  
6 Aprile 2002*

**10.30**

**Αίθουσα ZEUS**

Επίσημη Έναρξη - Grand Opening  
Ομιλίες Προέδρων - Χαιρετισμοί επιστημόνων  
Η Παραδοσιακή Χορωδία «ΙΩΝΙΑ ΑΗΔΩΝ»  
τραγουδά μελοποιημένα αποσπάσματα από την  
«Οδύσσεια» και «Τερτοίνες» του Καζαντζάκη.  
Συνθέτης: Μανώλης Κουναλάκης.  
Επιμέλεια - Διασκευή και Διεύθυνση:  
Καγιαβά Κική.

**12.00 - 14.30**

**Αίθουσα ZEUS**

Συζήτηση στρογγυλής τράπεζας με θέμα:  
«Ξένες Γλώσσες - Πληροφορική -  
Δια βίον Εκπαίδευση»  
«Το τρίπτυχο της προόδου και της ανάπτυξης»

**ΕΙΣΗΓΗΤΕΣ:**

**Στέλιος Ορφανουδάκης,**  
Διευθυντής Ινστιτούτου Τεχνολογίας &  
Έρευνας Κρήτης (ΙΤΕ), καθηγητής  
Πληροφορικής Παν/μίου Κρήτης  
**Αντώνης Τσοπάνογλου,**  
καθηγητής του τμήματος Ιταλικής Γλώσσας &  
Φιλολογίας του ΑΠΘ  
**Ευγενία Πετρίδου,**  
επ. καθηγήτρια στο Τμήμα Οικονομικών  
Επιστημών του ΑΠΘ  
**Σταύρος Δρόσος,**  
Αναπλ. καθηγητής & Ακαδημαϊκός Δότης  
Προγραμμάτων Workbased Learning του  
Παν/μίου Middlesex του Λονδίνου  
**Κώστας Στεφανίδης,**  
Αναπληρωτής Διευθυντής του Ινστιτούτου  
Πληροφορικής του ΙΤΕ, Αναπληρωτής  
καθηγητής στο Τμήμα Επιστήμης Υπολογιστών  
του Παν/μίου Κρήτης

**ΣΥΝΤΟΝΙΣΤΗΣ:** Στέλιος Ορφανουδάκης.

*Lunch Break: 14.30 - 16.00*

**PALSO Conference: Panel Discussion  
6 April 2002, Crete**

## KYPIAKH 7 AΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ 2002

10.00-16.00: ΕΚΘΕΣΗ ΞΕΝΟΓΛΩΣΣΩΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΘΗΤΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΣΩΝ

14.30 - 16.00: *Lunch Break*

ΩΡΕΣ	«EUROPA»	«ARTEMIS»	«APHRODITE»	«LEDA»	«PASIPHAE»
10.00-11.00	«ELL on the INTERNET» (Eds.): Opat. Peter Beech (TESOL)		«Workbased Learning» Opat. Stavros Dimas & Pano Thomas		
10.30-11.00		«Solid Steps to Proficiency from OUP» Opat. Helen Wadswold (Oxford University Press)			
10.00-11.30				ΣΕΜΙΝΑΡΙΟ ΕΞΕΤΑΣΤΩΝ TEPMAN Lecturer: Alison Taylor	
11.00-12.00	«Κατανοώντας τις μεθόδους διδασκαλίας» (Εκδόσεις: ELIA)				
11.00-11.30		«Deux nouvelles méthodes: LILL, la petite grenouille» Opat. Nancy Kallala (Εκδόσεις: CLÉ INTERNET)			
11.30-12.00				«Passport Deutsch» Opat. Kallala Evdokia (Εκδόσεις: CLÉ INTERNET)	
12.00-12.30	«What is the most Fantastic Package available for A-C Classes?» Opat. Linda De Costa (Εκδόσεις: Birmingham)		«Build up your Listening Skills» Opat. Nigel Downey (Εκδόσεις: Birmingham)		
11.30-12.30		«Galaxy», «Go Ahead & Go Ahead Plus», «Grammar today (1,2,3,4)» Opat. C. N. Geras (Εκδόσεις: English)			
12.00-13.00				«Phrasal verbs and idioms are they a pain in the classroom?» (Eds.): (Εκδόσεις: English)	

PALSO Conference: Presentation on WBL  
10.00 – 11.00am, 7 April 2002, Crete